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VOL. III.

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BY

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[Keddie, Henrietta]

IN THREE VOLUMES

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CHAPTER XL.

BITTER—SWEET.

TAFF PENRYN and Mary had their will. He was welcomed rather more cordially than usual, since he confessed to the modest part of being a mere pleasure-seeker, like the others ; he was treated in a manner like an old family connection. He was encouraged to take up his quarters at the *Roths Ross*, and he was allowed to attach himself to the party.

It seemed a matter of course, of which not the slightest notice was taken. Sharp-sighted Fra remarked it even less than the others, for in her self-assured mind Mary, in spite of her folly, was certainly bespoken for the Mad Graf. Taff Penryn had to take the place of Mr. Carteret, who was knocked up by the hot weather. He was to walk about all day with Mary, who was in what Fra described as ‘Polly’s very gushingest mood,’ and who was not to be prevented from making

the most of the family's stay in Nuremberg. And the rest of the family were positively obliged to Mary for taking the odd fellow off their hands.

The very weather smiled upon them, Mary said to herself, with fond, desperate self-delusion. The wet season, which had threatened the party at Pilsen, had passed entirely away. Except that the sun poured down his rays somewhat too strongly as well as steadily for English comfort, there was no fault to be found with the unchanged blue of the sky, the brightness of the mornings, and the balminess of the evenings. It was like the briefest space of time set apart and crowned with goodness, unmarred by grey clouds or drizzling showers.

Mary and Taff Penryn went everywhere together, undisturbed by the presence of fellow-tourists, to the music of the sharp cracking of the droschky-drivers' whips, and the mellow ringing of the bells—these, however, do not ring so continuously in Nuremberg as in Catholic towns; for the town by the Pegnitz is largely Protestant in the heart of Catholic Bavaria. Its history is the very reverse of that of Prague. Whatever it has suffered in the course of centuries, whatever it has lost of trade and sumptuous living—even of independence as a free city, whatever it has regained in modern days, it has retained, in a singular balance of proportion, the Protestantism which Melanchthon helped to establish. His statue still

stands among those of the men whom the town has delighted to honour. His gymnasium still flourishes.

Withal, there is an apparent amicableness and moderation existing in the Protestantism and the Roman Catholicism of Nuremberg, which are rarely found in rival sects. Not only are the old churches divided—St. Sebaldus and St. Lorenzo having fallen to the Protestants, while the Frauen Kirche remains in the possession of the Catholics—but Protestantism does not seem to have been so fiercely aggressive, or Roman Catholicism so sternly defensive here as elsewhere. Witness the uninjured chapels and altar-pieces (though the last are confined to representations of scenes in the life of our Lord, in the lives of the saints in the Old and New Testament); the ‘ever-burning lamp’ still in force, the ‘tabernacle,’ the ‘ciborium,’ the group of the Salut to Mary, preserved in the Protestant churches, and the comparative simplicity and inoffensiveness to Protestant eyes of the details in the Catholic churches.

The friends walked up to the Burg, and did not need language to express what they thought of the beauty of the old red walls and round towers, tufted with a gorgeous yellow weed, and hung over with luxuriant greenery in bush and tree. They looked across red roofs and spires, including the mosque-like gilt crowned cupola of the Jewish

synagogue, to the fair view of green meadows and woods, and dim blue mountains.

At their feet was the dry moat, filled with lush grass, or divided into people's gardens. Women were drawing water from the wells to sprinkle the white linen spread out to dry; a mother was seated on the ground threading daisy chains for the children at her knee; half-a-dozen more children were swinging together in one roomy swing; men were standing bareheaded smoking at the doors of their little summer-houses, or moving about inspecting the vegetables and fruit trees. Yet on the wall above was still to be seen the dent, said to have been left by the hoof-print of the horse of one of Mary and Taff's old friends, the Robber Knights; while higher up, in the court of the castle itself, lived on the lime tree 'planted by Queen Cunigunde's hands;' so strangely and sweetly were the tokens of war and peace, old and new, blended together!

Mary and Taff walked with unwearied feet over the rough Nuremberg pavement in every direction, and 'did the sights' again and again. They stood outside old St. Sebaldus, and examined the sculptures, in which the 'Day of Judgment' and the 'Agony in the Garden' are the favourite subjects. Monumental figures of donors to the church, with their wives and children, are freely interspersed. Mary remarked one kneeling lady, whose ample mantle extending

behind her, overshadowed a train of fourteen sons and daughters.

The 'Bride's Door' bore its admonition in stone, in the form of the five wise and the five foolish virgins, ranged round the arch. In the foolish virgins, dangling their heads and lamps alike, Mary was forced to distinguish a ludicrous resemblance to Lyd, in some of the attitudes induced by her present condition.

Inside the church, the sightseers stood by the brazen shrine of St. Sebaldus, at which Peter Vischer and his five sons worked for thirteen years, and which, resting on snails and dolphins, rises in figures of apostles and fathers of the Church, surrounding the coffer with the saint's bones, until it terminates in the figure of the child Christ, with the globe in one hand. In the dignity, beauty, and grace—wonderful in a man who had never seen the cartoons—with which the conception is wrought out, there is found room in an unobtrusive niche for a homely little figure of Peter Vischer himself, in his working apron, and grasping his chisel.

'Yes, it is fine; it is worth these thirteen years,' said Taff Penryn. 'I do not grudge them,' he added, with his peculiar dogmatism; 'but if art is served at such cost, is a lifetime too short to devote even to the first steps in these farther discoveries, which as electricity in this generation has girdled the earth, and gone far to annihilate

space and time, will yet, while it brings man infinitely nearer to perfection, lighten his every labour under the sun?'

As the two trod softly, gazed and communed, the sacristan, who had left them to their own devices, was succeeded by his wife—a cheery-faced, pleasant-spoken, practical Bavarian woman, who bustled in from market, and deposited her basket of beans and potatoes without ceremony on one of the benches.

The couple made their pilgrimage to St. Lorenzo, with its still more elaborate carving, its splendid doorway double lined with figures, and its rose window. They examined the chief glory of the church in Adam Krafft's receptacle for the Host, rising in Gothic fashion in a tall tower or spire, with much light fretted stonework, and with characteristic figures, the whole resting on the three bowed bodies of Adam Krafft and his two assistants. The group in stone was as noble and true to art as that by Veit Stoss, in painted wood, of the 'Salut to the Virgin,' suspended in the choir, was simply grotesque and meretricious.

The pair visited the Rathhaus, chiefly for the frescoes of Albrecht Dürer in the great hall, but they found the stalking and staring figures of the Emperor Maximilian and of King Midas far outdone by the specimens of the master's wood engraving—the last were so fine, so full of spirit, and often of drollery, that Mary was prompted to think

of Bewick's tail-pieces. And there was '*das Schöne Mädchen*,' the sweet-faced, life-sized figure of the Virgin, in wood, painted of a blueish-green colour, the work of an unknown carver ; and the '*Rosenkranz*' of Veit Stoss, with the delicately-cut little scenes—beginning with Adam and Eve in the Garden, and ending in the empty tomb of Christ—within the wreath of roses. There, too, among other relics more famous but less interesting to Mary, was the Sunday afternoon occupation, devised and executed by the noble ladies of Imdorf two hundred years ago. It consisted of a large piece of embroidery in coloured silks, with circles of printed texts and proverbs, round a centre of heraldic arms, birds, and animals.

St. Moritz's chapel, converted into a picture gallery, was not forgotten ; and there Mary saw and remembered nothing save Albrecht Dürer's '*Ecce Homo*'—a solemn and touching face and figure, with a singular look in it of the painter himself. The Lord wears the crown of thorns on his flowing auburn hair, and shows on his half-exposed body the marks of the stigmata and the streaming blood ; but there is nothing of the horrors of Rubens in the subdued treatment, while the face is full of solemn, piteous reproach.

That picture sent the gazers to the old house by the Thiergärtner Thor, at the head of the Bergstrasse. Nearly under the miniature figure of the knight in armour cap-a-pie, on the corner house

opposite that of Albrecht Dürer, an old woman was working along with a man, sawing wood in the sunshine. She wore a pink kerchief, above a strongly-marked, handsome old face ; on her spare brown arms, bared to the shoulder, the sinews stood out as on the man's arms. While Mary watched and admired the strength and precision with which the worker drew the saw across the firewood, a little thrill of envy shot through her. It was not that she coveted the qualifications for amazonian feats ; but here was a woman who was mistress of the situation, and who, even in age, could contribute her full tale of remunerative labour to the earnings of her household. Mary began to question whether these hard-working German women, whom she had been accustomed to consider not gently dealt with, and to pity accordingly, were altogether worse off, in their robust independence, than their feebler, more helpless sisters.

The visitors were permitted to walk over the painter's house, which belongs to his town. They mounted the stair with the old oaken balustrade, leading into the two low-roofed, tolerably spacious rooms—the one opening from the other, and which served as the sitting-rooms of the family. One window looked out on the quaint houses opposite, with the clear cut form of the knight raised aloft against the blue air, another commanded the great brown arch of the Thiergärtner Thor.

Let into the ceiling were little wood pieces

painted white, one a graceful representation of the Annunciation, reported to be the work of the painter's friend and contemporary, Veit Stoss. Old seats for two or three persons, and with backs and arms painted black, stood against the wall; one narrow high seat with a straight back terminating in a peak, and bearing a lozenge containing a coat of arms, was said to have been the painter's own chair; the green stove was also believed to have been his property. Some engravings of his works and a copy of his portrait of Willibald Pirckheimer hung along with more debateable pictures on the walls.

Taff Penryn walked up to the engraving of the tragic figure of 'Melancolia,' and contemplated it wistfully. 'No more now than in his day, can the mystery be solved,' he said. 'Here is the limit to every human attainment. Even if science achieved its most glorious gain—sin and misery, pain, sorrow, and death, would remain to baffle and wring men's hearts.'

'Is not this the answer?' said Mary, pointing to the engraving of 'The Knight, Death, and the Devil;' 'must not Albrecht Dürer have intended them for companion designs?'

On the lower storey was the Frau's 'Küche,' a small, low-roofed room having many angles, and almost filled with a tremendous brick stove. 'If Agnes spent much of her time here, don't you think the narrowness of her nature and the heat

of her temper are satisfactorily accounted for?' demanded Mary, waggishly.

The tradition of the painter's domestic troubles had a farcical embodiment in his old house. As the companions were contemplating reverently the humble, white-washed, cellar-like atelier, only lit by a half-moon window just raised above the level of the street, Mary ventured to disturb the slumbering manes by suggesting delicately to the custodian of the place that the great painter was not worthily mated. '*Ach, nein!*' came the emphatic answer; 'and she called down there,' pointing to an opening in the roof between that and the room above, 'when she thought he was not diligent enough.'

'What she might have been to him!' reflected Taff Penryn, softly. '*Ja wohl,*' he continued, quickly, 'when a man cannot win the gold, he ought to be thankful that he is not cumbered with the lead.'

The streets themselves were full of studies for these ardent students, who were privileged to study together a short space. There were many insignia instead of signs and remains of old emblems which have no present signification; sometimes it was a St. George slaying the Dragon, in weather-worn brass; sometimes a pilgrim's figure in stone; sometimes a mouldering coat of arms—always there were the old houses, with the high roofs and canopied windows. At innumerable points—whether in the older localities—whether opposite the

fortifications where there were modern houses with fresh and blooming gardens and the green trelliced entrance to the public walk of the Rose-nau—there were wonderful vignettes of gates, bridges, and hoary, garlanded walls.

In Panier or Banner Platz, where the square has a little triangular garden, with flowering shrubs in the centre, there was an old house of a dark-red colour, crossed with black wood, and distinguished by its fine windows. Another great house had been painted a greenish-white, and had a grand coat of arms surmounted by a crown above the doorway. Just beyond stood Petersen's Haus, the most beautiful old house in Nuremberg, built of dark grey stone, with high carved gable, high roof, and three-sided windows—one of them a great bow, towering into pinnacles—the whole relieved against the warm background of a wall tower.

A passer-by spoke to Mary and Taff of Petersen's house as 'the Schloss,' and called the greenish-white house 'Stürm's Haus,' adding that a *Sammlung* of what sounded like '*Dichter*,' had been held there. 'With Hans Sachs at their head,' cried Taff, leaping to a conclusion; and then he began to roll out the watchman's song, for the twilight was growing purple around them, and it was Germany, not England—a young man might sing aloud in the streets, without being regarded as a madman or taken up by the police—

Hört ihr Leut' und laszt euch sagen,
Die Glock hat zehn geschlagen.
Bewahrt das Feuer und auch das Licht,
Damit Niemand kein Schad' geschieht,
Lobet Gott den Herrn !

The worthy burghers of Nuremberg, with their woman-kind, do not disport themselves in mediæval attire in order to be in keeping with their mediæval town, unless, indeed, in the celebration of some of those anniversaries and festivals which Germans, as well as Italians, know how to keep ; but even on ordinary occasions there are occasional figures not unsuited to the surroundings.

Mary and Taff encountered a party of old Bavarian peasants belonging to a wedding company that deserved to be photographed. They were sandy-haired women, in full skirts and aprons of blue and black stuff, with round tippets to correspond. They had silver necklets and large silver brooches ; on the very back of their heads, fastened there by combs, were small, plain, unbordered black silk caps, terminating in several broad bows of black riband, standing out and hanging down in long ends behind. Another head-dress in the group consisted of the whole hair being combed back and drawn up to a knot in the crown, while the knot was covered by a tiny round black cap like a pincushion, embroidered with coloured braid, and kept in its position by black strings tied over the ears and under the

chin. Yet a third coiffure was managed by a kerchief of black embroidered woollen stuff being folded into a roll and simply tied round the head, with the ends falling down behind, the luxuriantly, carefully-dressed hair appearing in the centre.

On the last day left to Mary and Taff to spend together in Nuremberg—the very last of their present life of close association, and probably the termination of their intercourse for many months—the two took their way through the Thiergärtner Thor, bound for the Johannisfelder.

They walked along a dusty half-town, half-country road, past rows of a species of acacia-tree, which in early summer had been pink, with a profusion of flowers resembling those of the everlasting pea, and which were now covered with yellowing pods, until they reached Adam Krafft's 'Stations of the Cross,' carved on crumbling stone, sometimes built into the wall, sometimes rising in solitary blocks at regular intervals by the side of the road.

In other respects the road was ordinary enough, and showed the usual traffic to be found on the outskirts of a thriving town; for there is a Nuremberg without as well as within the walls, and the last has to do with colour-preparing, coach-building, &c. &c., in addition to the work in wood, carved by the skilful, horny hands of

peasants, and which forms the greatest attraction to strangers.

The representations of the sorrows of Him who bore the woes of the world, thus offered for these three hundred years, mute witnesses amidst the turmoil and dust of every-day occupation, made a deep impression on Mary. They seemed to point to the cross, which is in every life, and to the Bearer, who is always ready to relieve men of their burdens.

The snatched-at sweetness of this week of Mary's life had been a bitter sweetness, after all, constantly pervaded by the consciousness that her love, like poor little Lyd's, could have none of the fruition which happy women claim as their right. Nemesis, in the shape of a homely Brownie, would follow hard upon the respite which Mary and Taff had stolen from fortune. Nay, he had never been missing; he had travelled with the Caterets, mowing over Lyd's shoulder; he had awaited Mary on the *Brücke*; Brownie-like, he had professed to be her servant, and to minister to her right loyally for a space, but his time of retribution was coming speedily.

Still, there were a few hours to spare; and Mary shook off the sudden sinking of her heart, after its late ecstatic pleasure, and took to profiting with all her might, by the Johannisfelder which was left her, in such company.

The surroundings were of mingled ever new

freshness and venerable quaintness—from the fields of rye outside the Gottes-acker—to the title of the Brook Kedron given to a little stream which belonged to the burial-ground, and that of ‘Gasthaus to the Brook Kedron’ applied to the small house of refreshment for the needs of mourners built close by.

There was no time to spare on the opposite Heiligkreuz Capelle, with its own treasures of altarpiece and monument. For within the great old peaked gates lay dust which was still dear to the world.

Beyond the Calvary—with its life-size figures in old grey stone of the Saviour hanging between the two thieves, and Mary and John standing below—stretched a very wilderness of graves, so thick, under their great flagstones, that no grass grew there save what sprang in tufts out of crevices in the stones themselves. Yet there was no want of greenery, for there were flowers planted thickly round many of the more modern stones; and there were numerous large trees, sometimes in the centre, but especially round the sides of the Felder. Over all there prevailed the peace and the freedom of the country.

There was a wide contrast between the decorations and memorials on the ancient and modern stones. The former bore lasting, often very beautiful, reliefs in brass and iron, with clear-cut shields, coats of arms, and figures of knight and burgher, woman and child. The latter had gilt

crucifixes clumsy and lacquered-looking after the fine old iron work ; and were loaded with stiff immortelles painfully ugly or with tawdry wreaths of withered fir twigs and paper roses, which were allowed to perish in damp and decay.

There was no road through the older quarter, but the stones were numbered, so that the seekers had no difficulty in finding the one they sought undistinguished from its fellows, save by the inscriptions and the two coats of arms, one of them, the same as that on the painter's chair, let into the stone.

Taff Penryn stood with uncovered head, Mary by his side, at the foot of the stone where 'emigravit' signifies the only death an immortal can suffer.

Emigravit is the inscription on the tombstone where he lies ; Dead he is not—but departed—for the artist never dies. Fairer seems the ancient city, the sunshine seems more fair, That he once has trod its pavement, that he once has breathed its air !

That was no unfit or unkindly resting-place for the brave, wise, tender Nuremberger. All around him lay his fellows and their descendants for many generations. The place was still a sacred, yet familiar haunt. The fresh fields were lying quite at hand. The birds sang in their season in the waving boughs. Women and young girls were planting and watering flowers, and chatting with a subdued cheerfulness by stones

already weather-stained. Two women a little apart were crying quietly opposite a stone bearing fresh marks of the mason's chisel. The cobbler bard, Hans Sachs, slept within an arrow-flight. Veit Stoss's resting-place was also there; and so was that of the trusty friend Pirkheimer, whom young Albrecht Dürer had loved to paint linked arm in arm with himself, as a token of their sworn fellowship. But Mary asked in vain for the grave of Charitas, Willibald Pirkheimer's beloved elder sister, the learned Abbess of St. Clara, who meekly gave up her Latin and Greek at the austere bidding of the Barefooted Friars.

Mary and Taff preferred lingering in the sunshine to entering the *Holzschuher Capelle*, even though it offered the inducement of one of Krafft's entombments, with the likeness of the sculptor in the guise of Joseph of Arimathea. They were greeted by a woman employed to water the flowers, who directed them to a newly-placed stone, showing them with professional pride its great black wreaths, with silver leaves relieving the blackness. In the centre of one wreath was the word '*Liebe*,' and in the other '*Andenken*,' executed with silver letters. The self-appointed cicerone informed the strangers this was the grave of a childless wife, two months dead, and that the wreaths had been sent by the bereaved husband.

'I suppose it was some consolation to the poor

fellow,' said Taff Penryn, wonderingly ; 'but men are differently constituted. To think of commemorating the desire of one's eyes by wretched trumpery like that !'

As Mary remarked the absence, for the most part, of any personal dedication of the stones, which frequently bore the general inscription of 'Familiën Gruft von ——,' her attention was attracted to the German custom, which causes children under twelve years of age to be buried apart from their families, in the portion of the Gottes-acker reserved for them. There was a peculiar charm in this children's domain—in the many little graves, each bearing the name and age of the young sleeper beneath, in the tender '*Ruht Sanft*' over the baby, which had been transferred straight from its mother's bosom to the lap of this earth—the common mother of us all. As here there was no bitterness of association, so here was the most profuse bloom of flowers, planted by fingers which still ached to tend human flowrets early blighted.

Mary and Taff returned to take one last look at the painter's grave. 'Do you remember,' said Taff to her, 'that the first time I met you in Germany—when I began to feel to know you—was by Dürer's pictures in the Dresden gallery ?'

'I remember,' said Mary, a little faintly.

'It seems a coincidence that we should bid each other good-bye over his grave in the Johan-

nisfelder at Nuremberg ; for to-morrow we must go our different ways—very different ways, Miss Carteret.’

‘ Yes,’ said Mary, still more faintly, but very quietly, preserving perfect composure.

She felt as if nothing could make her give way when he spoke thus resignedly, and without protest, of their coming separation and of the future divergence of their roads in life. Though she knew, and at another time might respect, his reasons, it smote her at this moment in the light of a cruel wrong, done to her as well as to himself, that he was yielding her up, without farther struggle, after giving way to one brief indulgence of the passion, which had only leapt into conscious and active existence after the afternoon at the Ringstein. He was sacrificing her, as it appeared to her, even more than himself—who had the fight and the glory—to the exigencies of his self-denying far-reaching career.

Mary was tempted more than she had ever been, now that her own heart bled, to join with the world and her father in condemning Taff Penryn as a visionary enthusiast—an absolute monomaniac, who, as other men have doomed whole nations to fire and sword for the sake of a theory, was prepared to offer up himself and her as victims to the wildest of dreams.

But if Mary had known it was love rather than

duty, or the calling which he regarded as highest duty, that impelled Taff Penryn to his words that day.

In the old times, when glad, sweet 'visions of the perfect woman, the strong and tender helpmeet, who might yet be his, had crossed his mind, he had never for a moment doubted that her devotion to him and to his cause was the greatest honour and happiness which could befall her. He had contemplated with perfect coolness, nay with a species of exaltation, that she should lead with him a Spartan life—a laborious, frugal life, not impossibly attended by such privation and hardship as a fond, faithful woman can meet and overcome for the sake of him she loves.

All was changed when the maiden of his imagination had a living realisation, and was no hardily-nurtured, noble-souled peasant girl—not even the patient, diligent, economy-practising daughter of a poor German professor—but a delicately-bred English woman of the upper classes, one of the children of an English squire, who in a life of retrenchment abroad maintained an establishment which put to shame that of many a German nobleman.

His Mary, who had so listened to him, and looked as if she believed in him, and who had stolen his heart by her faith and sympathy, was a woman of dainty habits and refined leisure—a creature utterly unused to aught save what he

considered luxury, ease, and dignity, the very pride of life. He could not tell how simple-hearted she was, how large-minded—in that sense of largeness which values lightly personal indulgence, which counts all well lost for virtue and honour, which yearns and pines to aid worthily the world's work, and to help on its grand Christian progress.

Love did not give him unerring intuition, it only taught him fond forbearance and tender consideration. Far more than he dreaded her father's opposition, he felt that he could not ask Mary Carteret to relinquish for him all the delicate usages of her gentle nurture, all the innocent pleasures and graces which he had once despised, but which he had suddenly grown quick-sighted to rate above their value for her sake. He could not contemplate on her account the drudgery and self-denial which he accepted willingly for himself. He was not false to his convictions, and to the pursuit of his life; but neither could he be hard to her.

He only said, simply and solemnly, with his blonde head bowed, and his cheeks growing pale under their bronze, as the two stood together in the Johannisfelder, by the grave of Albrecht Dürer, 'It is better that our paths turn aside here; I see it, I feel it, *liebe Freundin*. I hope you will remember me a little, though without regret; for I only follow my destiny, and I shall have thrown no shadow on the brightness of your fortunes. Perhaps you will hear of me one day.

If so—if I advance one step towards my goal—I am sure of your interest ; you would rejoice with me, though we were in different spheres ? ’

What could she say ? Surely, not plead with him to abandon his hopes, however fallacious—his struggles, however severe and protracted—to obtain her, even if she could safely promise him the reward ? That was not a proud, modest woman’s part. Besides, Mary had a clear comprehension, which crushed her to the earth at this moment, that to win her, dearly as he loved her, at the expense of his dreams and schemes, would be no lasting satisfaction to Taff Penryn. Satisfaction ! It would be the life-long discontent of withdrawal from his native element, the perpetual shame of a renegade from his appointed post. Taff Penryn was not made of the doting stuff that can sell a birthright, and sell it with abiding thankfulness, for any woman’s love—precious as the love was in this case, to the young man without family ties.

Mary could only bend her head and force herself to say in a choked voice, ‘ I shall always wish you success, Mr. Penryn,’ and feel that the bitterness of the parting remained with her.

CHAPTER XLI.

MUNICH AND THE TRAVELLER WHO DID NOT SEEM
OUT OF PLACE THERE.

THE meeting lines had turned off at right angles, as Taff Penryn had announced. He was gone back to Dresden, and the Carterets had started for Munich.

One railway from Nuremberg to Munich leads through long tracts of firwood, and through a broken and hilly country, with old castles in ruins, and little white and yellow churches, having sharp black spires, on the heights.

Mary's eyes were heavy, and her mind pre-occupied ; but a group winding along a country road, under the midday sun, engraved itself on her mind. It was that of a lumbering cart bearing a great green load of fragrant grass, and led by a stout fellow of a driver. On the top of the grass sat an old woman in the common black kerchief headdress of the country. Beside her rested a young woman, her face shaded by a scarlet kerchief, while her body was thrown back, as she played with a laughing child in a blue frock.

Scarlet petticoats with white sleeves to the bodices, scarlet or blue headdresses, showed plentifully, like cornflowers in the fields, among which the summer work was going on ; but Mary's imagination turned back obstinately to the family group, seated on the pile of grass in the cart.

Country houses, instead of old castles, with their white weather-stained walls, shone out in dim blocks of building among their settings of trees. The steeples of the churches began to swell into round balls like those of pagodas.

At a wayside station, two or three women of a religious order in black gowns, with veils over their white hoods arranged so as to form round collars, and having long rosaries hanging by their sides, walked demurely into the train. A peasant woman, with a broad-brimmed black straw hat above her black kerchief, betokened the advance of fashion. At Prague Mary had seen a young Moravian woman with a round hat, but she had carried it over her arm as an ornament, which, when it was put to its natural use, proved too great an encumbrance.

Landshut came in sight, hanging on the edge of a wooded hill, with its great yellow-walled, red-roofed castle, commanding the town, and the tall church spire of St. Martin's, visible for many a mile.

The valley of the Isar was green and wooded, and had meadows which even in early autumn

were flowery with crimson maiden pinks, white valerian, and a tall, branching, erect blue campanula; while the Bavarian Alps, with great patches of snow on their peaks, which glittered in the sunshine, rose in a rugged line on the horizon. A great plain, fit for Europe's battle-fields, surrounded the city, which is at once the Paris and the Athens of Southern Germany.

Mary did not, from the first, take kindly to Munich, though she and her family escaped injury from the cold breath of the Alps, which, succeeding the hot air generated by an almost fierce sun, induces fever, and renders the bill of health the most unsatisfactory among those of European towns.

Doubtless the deficiency was in Mary's self—certainly she was compelled to admire those spacious tree-bordered streets where every public building is a palace, and to figure to herself what the Maximilian's Strasse must look like, when its double rows of red flowering chestnuts were in blossom, and lent to it the effect of an avenue of pomegranate trees.

She was bound to admit that this Gate of Victory—that Hall of Generals—the art palaces exceeding in number even the royal palaces—the colossal statues—the huge frescoes, were stately in form and æsthetic in spirit, and yet they were full of satire, not lurking about, but grinning broadly from their masonry. The face of many a statue

might have had the tongue in the cheek ; more than one fresco might have claimed to be a lampoon, before the climax was reached of the monument to Ludwig erected by the grateful subjects who were yet to dethrone him ; and the Propylæa, built in honour of the successful wars of King Otto of Greece, the inauguration of which was celebrated by the violin-playing king's return in exile to his native town. These were the fruits of art grown lying and crazy, of a king the munificent patron of art who was fain to give his people a stone—an opera, a dance, for bread, for national prosperity, and patriotic virtue.

Fra might be enchanted, and call Munich a German Paris ; but Mary was glad to turn away for a season from the treasures in store for her, to stand on the bridge over the Isar, and look down on the river, which, in place of flowing 'dark as nightfall,' is white, as with an admixture of chalk, and has the whiteness barely relieved by a greenish tinge in the milky waters, which are broken into several channels, and rush along foaming before they disappear among the thick, dark-green foliage of their banks. An odd apparition of a little old-fashioned-looking water-mill on an island, in the stream, arrested the eye of the stranger who had just quitted the pretentious street.

After all that art had done—and without denial it had done much, even in the midst of exaggeration and distortion—for Munich, one of the greatest

charms of the town was the natural air of its pleasure-gardens, where the luxuriant grass was purple, red, yellow, and white with wild flowers in their season, and where the trees waved and the waters brawled well-nigh at their own sweet will. In addition, these Anlagen, with their distant views of the Alps, were in easy proximity to the centre of gay display and busy traffic.

Mary's stay at Munich was, like her stay in Nuremberg, to be commemorated by a striking personal event. The Carterets dined at the *table d'hôte* of a *Speise Saal*, radiant with white and gold, and rejoicing in life-size female figures in plaster as supporters—the whole forming the triumph of their great hotel.

The main flight of the English tourists already showed specimens of newly-married couples—the ladies in fine feathers—together with solitary, somewhat dingy men from city offices, and whole families, of staid *pater* and *mater*, rampageous boys in marine blue, and eager girls in travellers' grey.

But Mary had got so far German in her tendencies that without Fra's affectation of despising her own country people, she turned inadvertently to a more accessible source of interest in the natives, among whom she had been so long sojourning.

There was not a very promising selection on the present occasion. Next the Carterets, there

was a foreign young woman who had her table-napkin tucked into the collar of her gown, and who sat down to dinner as if preparing for business. There was a red-haired young woman with a prominent Roman nose and high cheek bones, untidy in her dress and in her hair, full of animated talk, with a long-haired student next her, making him turn round and laugh at every party who entered the room. There was an American lady, with her hair dressed like Minerva's helmet, and a handsome face under the hair. Her husband, though he looked as pithless as she was pithy, was of course a colonel. Their baby-girl, who came to the table sometimes, behaved with the languid decorum of a fine lady, appeared slightly *blasée*, at five years, and wore a ring on her small forefinger. Two young children of a German mother sipped their wine, just as Mary saw the infants in the public gardens fed by the nurses, with crusts soaked in beer.

Suddenly, in the bustle of a new arrival, Mary caught a glimpse of a brick-red, scarred cheek, and wild locks of yellow hair. She did not need to see any farther; she felt that it was poetic justice the Mad Graf should turn up at Munich.

She had certainly not written any letter which could apprise him of where the Carterets were making their summer tour. She did not suspect Fra of having taken it upon her to supply the object of her admiration with the necessary information.

It was in the natural course of things, while it was purely accidental, that he should be there.

Nay, while Mary sat for a few moments the sole possessor of the secret that the great Mad Graf was in the company, since not even Fra, in her innocence of all complicity, discovered him till she had done with astonishing the people opposite her by trying Jamaica pepper to her melon, she thought that the man's fantasticalness was not ill met there. Doubtless there were many a profound student, and many a sober-minded, earnest-hearted, and modest-tempered artist hard at work within the town's bounds; but she had seen a certain kingly figure riding alone, with his whip thrust into one of his long riding-boots, that bore no slight resemblance to the Graf. No doubt, in the stories which were told of the royal eccentricities, the crotchets were those of an accomplished man, art-bitten, like so many of his race. But did there not appear the same scorn of counsel and recklessness of appearances—in which there surely lurked a secret passion for notoriety—the same headlong pursuit of this and that attraction in both heroes? As for enmity to and hatred of women, that might be a later development of the Graf's idiosyncrasy.

The Graf and his ally, Fra, recognised their near neighbourhood almost simultaneously. 'Oh, Mary, Mary, do you know who is here?' cried Fra, casting her superciliousness to the winds, and, quite

careless as to who heard the exclamation, in her startled excitement. Even Lyd was roused from her dejected indifference into a state of smiling flutter; for was not the Graf the cousin of Baron Sandor?

As for the Graf, he stared fixedly, thrusting his hands through his hair. Then, after Mary had hoped for a second, from the failure of any token of recognition, that the catastrophe at the Ringstein had proved an effectual cure for his folly, he rose from the table—regardless of the disturbance of the arrangements made for a hundred guests, and of the horror of the waiters—and walked round the long room behind the disturbed ranks of the diners, till he reached the Carterets. He bowed low in uttering his monosyllabic greeting, bowing lowest behind the lady of his devotion, and standing still at her back, as if prepared to remain there for the rest of the endless courses, content to wait for a look or a word in addition to Fra's voluble welcome.

Mr. Carteret put an end to the scene, though not until all eyes were fixed upon it. 'Do not let us keep you from your dinner, Herr Graf,' he said, very decidedly and a little gruffly to the many ears pricked to catch his words. 'We are really obliged to you for being so glad to see us that you have taken the trouble to come round; but I insist, with some regard to the feelings of

our landlord, that our civilities be deferred until we have done justice to his good things.'

The Graf bowed again, and slowly withdrew to his seat, casting lingering glances at Mary, amidst polyglot whispers of 'Who did you say he was? Prince —— the Baron —— a well-known Saxon graf of great possessions—somebody of consequence, no doubt, to take so much upon himself. Did you observe how he distinguished one of the English young ladies?—a case of enslavement there without question. The heroine is handsome enough, not so piquante as one of her sisters. The father did not appear uplifted or enchanted by the prospect. Either the graf does not include an offer of marriage in his homage, or here is one of those intolerably proud and self-satisfied Englishmen ("a sturdy old duffer" some of his countrymen called him), on whom so brilliant a chance for his daughter is thrown away.'

'I shall take you away to-morrow if you wish it, Mary,' said her father aside to her, the moment the family were in their own rooms. 'But, after all, I don't suppose that he will take a bite of you, as we used to say when we were children. Besides, I have a notion you were right when you suggested, that the more loudly and rudely you said "No" to this fellow, the more he would be impelled to press you publicly to say "Yes." Perhaps if you showed him a little complacency, he would come to his senses, and cool down all the

sooner. I do not mean he has not been in earnest in his suit ; but simply that, having been baulked, has made him so doggedly keen in it, the faintest perception of a chance of ultimate success on his part, might really startle him into a clearer comprehension. He might see it was but the fancy of a moment, and not more calculated to prove for his happiness than for yours.'

'It is rather a queer way of getting rid of an importunate suitor ; but you may be right, papa, all the more that your suggestion is not very flattering to my vanity.'

'Of course it is annoying to you and all of us. If the fellow had proper feeling, not to say sense, he would refrain from dancing attendance where he is not wanted. But still I cannot get rid of the idea,' continued Mr. Carteret, following out his train of thought, 'that a flight on your part would not be a dignified, any more than it would be a convenient course.'

'No, don't let us fly, which might suggest to a wiser man than the Graf, that we wished to be pursued,' said Mary warmly ; 'and don't let any consideration of annoyance for me interfere with your plans, papa.'

She had it in her mind—not only that there would be a want of dignity in flight, but that flight had been more called for from Nuremberg than from Munich.

Staying on in the same hotel with Mr. and

Mrs. Carteret, who were bound over as it were to courtesy, since they could not consent to insult the man merely for his constancy, and for his declining to give up the hope of winning their daughter—with Fra and Lyd, from different motives, resolutely friendly—involved a considerable renewal of intercourse between Mary and the Graf.

She was not without a comical perception that her father might be right. The Graf might only want a little encouragement, to desist from the ardour of his wooing. She had read somewhere, with regard to Waller and his Saccharissa, that if the veritable Lady Dorothy Sydney had smiled assent to her poet's high-flown addresses, he would have started back in consternation and affright. The Graf was not very like Waller, still the old English poet and the modern German nobleman might have some feelings in common.

However, save in showing himself slightly astonished by Mary's no longer taking the wasted trouble to avoid him—and beyond the fact that in his slowness he was not able to take any sensible advantage of the many opportunities which now presented themselves for enforcing his siege, so that Mary could easily escape a renewal of a crisis—the change of tactics did not produce great fruits. The Graf did not desist from his homage, or from paying it in a highly demonstrative manner, so that all the occupants of the hotel, and not a few members of the select circles beyond, were soon

enjoying the excitement of witnessing little scenes from the drama, just as it had been enjoyed by the *haute volée* of Dresden.

Mary believed she was getting hardened, or that she was too tired with the burden of her own experience of life, to mind being the victim of the Graf's vanity as she had once minded it.

'We are coming round,' said Fra.

'Oh, Mary, if you thought you ever could accept the Graf,' hesitated Lyd, a little more shyly and tenderly than of old, but still with such an evident ulterior motive in her imploring eyes, that Mary could have answered her directly, 'In order that one marriage might promote another, and that the Graf might become a stay to the Baron. No thank you, dear Lyd—I would do much to ensure your happiness, but I cannot consent to sacrifice my own, not even though I should be the sole sufferer,' she added to herself bitterly.

And yet Mary had to undergo her temptation during these hot, much occupied days in Munich. No woman is without the desire for power, or insensible to the mortification—granted that it belongs to her lower and weaker nature—of finding herself and her love not enough for the man she loves, of being made to see that dear though she is to him, he can live and work without her, while he will not resign his work for her sake.

The devil of wounded love and pride whispered to Mary many a time, when she was looking at

pictures and statues, or listening to music, or feeling herself almost in an English park in the *englischen Garten*, where the Graf was constantly making his appearance, that the one lover had left her of his own accord, while the other was by her side, not to be repulsed or driven away.

If she should take the compensation offered her, she would be, as her father had pointed out, a woman who could command many solaces, who would have much in her power in the course of her life to benefit her fellows—and truly the last consideration ought to render life not merely bearable but honourable. Her father might be surprised and disappointed by her final decision, but neither he nor her mother would oppose it, any more than they would have opposed her acceptance of the Graf in the first instance. Fra would be exultant, and poor Lyd consoled by hope.

But Mary was a good and wise woman. She knew that, if she recanted, three-fourths of the cause of the recantation would proceed from impatience under her present cross, and anger—love's tempestuous, unreasonable anger—with Taff Penryn for conduct which only made her respect and love him a thousand times more in her heart of hearts because he would not be her, or any woman's slave; because he would always remain master of himself and his destiny. So she said, 'Get thee behind me, Satan,' to these

specious arguments, until she was delivered from their deceitful pleas.

Yet the pleas combined with other influences to soften somewhat her hardness to the Graf, to induce her to regard him almost indulgently, as a poor, stupid, wild fellow, who was yet honest, and who had a real liking for her, though he exaggerated it into a grand passion. She began not so much to frown indignantlly as to smile sadly at his antics.

CHAPTER XLII.

THE GRAF'S ANTICS, WHICH LENT VARIETY AND
ADDED ZEST TO THE SIGHT-SEEING.

THERE continued an abundant crop of the antics, and they had a singular power, not merely of vitality, but of spontaneous growth at odd times and in singular circumstances.

The Graf would drop his handkerchief when riding a restless horse past the hotel in which the Carterets lived, for no apparent purpose save that of perilling his life in front of the windows by stooping from the plunging animal to pick it up.

He would show himself at his window in the quarter which he always occupied, from choice, at the top of the house, and emulate the undesirable pranks of the red-haired woman whom Mary had seen at the *table d'hôte*, and who, in an evening dress of silk and lace, would lean from the open window of the reading-room and exchange badinage with a knot of officers collected on the pavement, for the edification of all the little boys in Munich. The Graf did not, indeed, practise badinage, but he would smoke comfortably, with his long legs dangling over the sill.

The Graf, by barefaced bribery and corruption, had got himself promoted over the heads of less recent arrivals, till he had his seat at table next the Carterets. He would present Mary with an enormous choice bouquet every day, and instead of sending it anonymously, or modestly with his card, to the privacy of her room, he would be himself the donor before the edified audience of the *Speise Saal*.

In the middle of the night he was seized with an intuition that a conflagration was smouldering in the hotel ; and he not only rung up the house and insisted, against every representation, on summoning on his own responsibility the fire-engine—but planted sentries in the corridor leading to the Carterets' rooms, and bivouacked on the pavement at the foot of the pile of ladders ready to be raised to their windows.

He stood in some awe of Mr. Carteret, else he would have bullied every man who so much as looked at Mary, either at table or in the endless galleries and exhibitions, where he was constantly starting up and as constantly vanishing the next moment ; since he was the most restless of men, and the endless art galleries, in spite of the treasures of art said to be stored at Schloss Felsberg and the Sophienlust, were intolerably wearisome to him. Fra, in the middle of her genuine respect for the representative of so many thousands of acres of forest and meadow land, and of castles

and country houses by the half-dozen, could not help likening him to a Jack-in-the-box.

But not even Mr. Carteret could prevent his would-be son-in-law from making short work with the instrumental band at one of the open-air concerts, where nursery-maids and their charges—citizens and their woman-kind—court officials and their lady-kind, on benches round little tables—on horseback—in carriages, all ranged under the shade of green trees, drank beer or coffee, ate sausages and black bread, or *honig kuchen* and biscuits, and listened to an advertised programme of music. The Graf had sent an imperious order to the musicians to play ‘God save the Queen,’ and when they very properly declined to allow his interference or comply with his command, he suddenly, without the least warning, turned like a madman, spurred his horse and went crashing past the frail wooden work of the pavilion and the platform. The result was an extinction, for the moment, of the public performance, while the whole pavilion shook. The big drum came tumbling to the ground, the first fiddle swore tremendously, and the utmost confusion prevailed both among the performers and the audience.

The Carterets, in their simplicity, expected nothing less than that the Graf would be taken up as a disturber of the public peace, and for raising a riot, and that they should be implicated in the arrest, which ought to end in another year’s

imprisonment, like that which he had already undergone for the indulgence of his duelling propensities after quitting college. But Germans are phlegmatic ; the Graf had a full purse, and was not niggardly of his douceurs to make up for the bruises sustained by the drum and the hurt feelings of the first fiddle, and somehow his character seemed to throw an ample shield over his delinquencies.

Happily, these were very busy days at Munich. They used to begin with the clash of military music and the clatter of a troop of cavalry riding past to their exercising ground, startling the Carterets from their beds as early as five o'clock in the morning. To judge from the number of spectators who were in the streets, or who turned out in complete toilette to look at the customary spectacle from vine-festooned balconies, Mary, who had seen the same people sauntering or eating sausages and salad, under the moonlight, late the evening before, was prone to conclude that the Munichers dispensed with sleep.

It was to a similar accompaniment of military music and parade of troops that all the sight-seeing went on. Marching and counter-marching were the order of the day in Munich still more than the other towns of Germany. Heads or tails of regiments were perpetually coming into or passing out of view, as the Carterets turned the corners of streets ; while in the exercise ground itself stalwart Bavarians swarmed like bees, and

electrified the uninitiated visitors by standing on one leg, vaulting over bars, climbing ladders without the use of hands, or swinging past each other on single planks for impromptu bridges.

There seemed to be metal for everybody's mind in Munich, and it was very ungrateful, as well as imprudent, of Mary to be always looking back regretfully to Nuremberg. For Fra there were *alte* and *neue Residenzen*, where the Carterets, in company with a little crowd of English and American sight-seers, newly married German couples, Bavarian peasants—with double rows of silver buttons on the men's coats, and necklaces of silver chains, fastened with clasps in which pearls were set, round the women's necks—and rough lads in long boots, passed the sentries in green, and ascended by flights of steps to the Hercules Room. It was but the vestibule to splendours worthy of a King Max or a King Ludwig. What could surpass, in Fra's eyes, the gold-embroidered bed-curtains, which it had taken forty persons so much of their precious lives to embroider; or the Mirror Cabinet, with its brackets and bits of china running from floor to ceiling all round; or the Miniature Room, lined with gilt-set miniatures like so many seals?

Fra prized especially the cabinet with portraits of beautiful women of every rank, class, and nation—princesses, burghers' wives, actresses, German, Italian, English, and Greek. She listened here attentively to the stout, severe-looking, grey-haired

guide wearing earrings, who waited duly till his straggling flock had assembled, then shouted his information over their heads. She was particularly impressed by the intelligence that the picture of the lady with the braided hair and lace berthe, who represented English charms, was that of Lady Milbank; yet Fra was clever enough to remark the sameness and the unintellectual character of the beauties' faces, and to suggest that it would have been a great improvement if a few ugly characteristic physiognomies had been drafted in among the others by way of relief.

After the personal interest of the Cabinet of Beauties, Fra was more than indifferent to, she was disdainful of, what she styled 'the heroics' in the Battle Saloon and the Halls of Charlemagne, Barbarossa, and Hapsburg; though Mary would stay in the last to study Rudolph delivering judgment on the Robber Knights, and to point out that the sullen defiance of the nearly naked prisoners, the piteous appeal of the women who had been their prey, the righteous indignation of the young king, were fine, and creditable to the genius of Schnor, the painter.

The ball-room with its dancing genii, the throne room with the great gilt and bronze statues of men of the royal Bavarian house, were more endurable; but Fra yawned desperately, and threatened to run away, like the Graf, from the halls of the Niebelungen Lied. 'You do him injustice'—Mary

suddenly stood up in her absent squire's defence — 'He is a true German, whatever he is, and he would care for the legends of Siegfried and Chriemhild far more than even an average Englishman would heed the stories of Arthur, Lancelot, and Guinevere.'

'We are coming round,' repeated Fra, roguishly. 'My dear Polly, I will spend hours with you in the Halls of Treachery and Revenge, to manifest my appreciation of your common sense.'

For Mary's delectation there was the beautiful Court Chapel of the Allerheiliggeiste, which, in its subdued light, its softly tinted marble pillars and panels, its solemn rich frescoes on their golden background, and its unadorned simplicity in other respects, surpassed in perfection of taste any modern Roman Catholic church she had seen.

For Mary also there were the old and modern Pinakotheks. In the old there was Albrecht Dürer's 'Four Apostles,' which he had presented as a gift to his native town. But, great picture as it was—singularly free from the stiffness and grotesqueness which had disfigured his early pictures—noble in character, and to artists probably far superior in technical merit—Mary could not prefer it to the 'Ecce Homo' of Nuremberg. And there was his own portrait, with the long crisp curls and the manly beautiful face, sedate even in its blooming youth.

There were such grand pictures of Rubens' as cannot be seen—if you except the 'Descent from the Cross'—out of Madrid, with all the coarseness lost in the splendid power and freedom. The 'Day of Judgment' and the 'Woman of the Apocalypse' were not terrible or ghastly, or even very sublime, but great sheets of magnificent drawing and colouring. There were portraits of Isabella Brant and Helena Fourment, with or without Rubens himself in the picture, glowing and glorious as never painter, before or since, limned his wife.

There were dark Rembrandts full of mystery, both in their style and in their solemn subjects, and yet Dutch looking in the middle of their poetry.

There was among the well-known, carefully analysed Raphaels, Leonardos, Titians, and Correggios, one picture by a painter unknown, of the Virgin stooping down and kissing the dead Christ, which in spirit was unspeakably touching.

There were two market girls examining their gains, by Murillo, in which the expression of the one answered to the look of Fra, and that of the other to the glance of Lyd.

There were treasures of old, old pictures by Master Stephan and Master Wilhelm of Cologne, which only critics could fully appreciate; and there were, as at Dresden, patent to all who had eyes

to see, picturesque little Wouvermans, radiant Claudes, cool Ruysdaels, mellow or dry brown Hobbemas and Boths, graphic Mieris, and such a Gerard Dow, of an old woman cutting bread, as he himself never surpassed.

In the modern Pinacothek, built out of the empty private purse of King Ludwig, where the visitor is even exempt from paying the customary fee for leaving his umbrella in charge, Mary found herself in another world. She felt the 'Pièta' by Fischer strangely classic and cold; she preferred Piloty's triumphal procession of Germanicus, with Thusnelda, forced to grace the conqueror's entrance into Rome, walking as a captive among captives; or his astronomer Seni standing appalled by the bleeding body of Wallenstein.

She tried to understand the mixture of allegory and truth in the crowds forming Kaulbach's great 'Fall of Jerusalem,' and could only end by admiring its angels and its unearthly colour.

She was singularly attracted by a picture of Schrandolph's, where Mary and Mary Magdalene, with John, watch from a little distance the nailing of Christ to the cross, invisible to the spectators. The despair and horror in the looks and attitudes of the gazers on the awful spectacle, unseen save by themselves, were enough to thrill the passer-by.

Quite different was one of Overbeck's Holy Families, pure, earnest, and delicately fine, but passionless.

As for the bits of streets, the village inns, the young monk feeding the poor, the old man making toys for the children, the figures digging for treasure in the moonlight as they might have dug for it on Gisela's gold mountains, the reapers on the harvest field detecting their village set on fire by lightning—had Mary not been living for many months among the originals?

It was like turning back in life, to stumble on Sir David Wilkie's 'Reading of the Will,' which the kindly Scotch painter had been so pleased to see do him credit in its foreign place. The widow was perhaps a little theatrical and conventional, with her soft 'marriage à la mode' face and her bare arms, but the old nurse and baby were capital; so were the unconcerned little boy on the hearth-rug, the shrewd impartial lawyer, the disappointed expectants, and the hectoring old lady in the white satin—wearing the huge bonnet and carrying the muff—in the act of being ushered in with *empressement* by the footman in scarlet breeches. No wonder that a countryman of the painter's found the picture surrounded on a fête day by appreciating Bavarian peasants.

At the Glyptothek Mary's admiration was still more that of an ignoramus. She could not do other than take on faith 'the Torso of the Child of Niobe,' without a head, and with merely fragments of arms; but she had a feeling for some of the stately graceful Apollos, Venuses, and

Minervas; and she was thankful that she could honestly and heartily admire the fine figure with the ineffable expression of weariness and repose in the hanging arms, relaxed muscles, and drooping face of the Barberini Fawn.

She could not call these galleries, as Fra styled them, 'theatres of surgical operations among the ancients, preserved in a state of petrification,' any more than she could term the gallery of vases 'a series of pot and pan rooms!'

In the theatre—that pride of German theatres, because of the enviable combination of space, elegance, and cheapness, Mary and Fra had their tastes equally catered for.

Mary claimed Schiller's 'Maria Stuart.' The heroine was not interpreted by another Kunigunde, but the actress was sufficiently good to carry the house with her. When she came in dressed, according to Schiller's express direction, for her execution as for her bridal, in spotless white, with a wreath of flowers on her uncovered head, and received the farewells of her mourning attendants, already clothed in the blackest weeds, the spontaneous, irrepressible sobs of the audience drowned the weeping on the stage.

Mary had never witnessed such a scene in a theatre. The very air was full of hysterical agitation. As for herself she had been considerably exercised in another fashion by the stiffness of Burleigh, the frantic violence of Mortimer, even by

the fact that the Leicester for the night had an unfortunate double version of the German rattle of the letter *r*, so that he might be said by a captious critic to burr like a Northumbrian. She was haunted, too, by a sense that the Graf—also in the gallery of the nobles—was identifying himself throughout with Leicester as he had formerly identified himself with the heroes of ‘*Der Freischütz*,’ and ‘*Robert le Diable*.’ She could only hope that he was not associating her with Maria Stuart; then she remembered his ‘*Beautiful Maria*’ in the adventure at the Ringstein, and hid her face in her handkerchief to hide her half-nervous laughter.

Yet in her newly-found charity she was edified by the sonorous blowing of the Graf’s nose, in chorus with the blowing of many other masculine noses, as Maria stumbled, was raised by Leicester, and spoke to him her sentence of forgiveness, on her way to the scaffold.

‘What a horrid wretch I must be,’ thought Mary, ‘for there are no tears in my eyes; and yet I can cry with the best of them, in my own way, and at my own time.’

Fra appropriated ‘*Marthe*,’ with its prettiness and fantastic picturesqueness, and its gay melodious music, to meet her needs.

At the Museum, which might have lasted the sight-seers for a week, naturally, there was, in the huge heterogeneous collection, material for everybody. There were sufficient archæological speci-

mens to engage Mr. Carteret, who had a turn for archæology, every time he went there.

There were rococo beds and chairs, and coronation coats and costumes, with the wedding dresses of sovereigns, for Fra.

There were ancient dolls in quaint costumes which awoke faint smiles from Lyd.

And there was a whole boudoir with its contents, as it had 'stood,' of a Countess Fugger, and which proved almost as interesting to Mrs. Carteret as to Mary. It was not unlike a large wooden 'box bed,' such as may still be found in peasants' houses in Scotland; and yet it had the solid air of being hollowed out of a single block of wood. There was a little free, bold carving over and about the door. Inside there were four high-backed chairs. A brass cup which might have held holy water hung near the door. A large earthenware vessel, like a huge ewer for common use, was in an alcove. A small inlaid marble table, with a white vase on it, and a square mirror, framed in black, on the wall, completed the furniture of what no doubt was considered the luxuriant boudoir of the princely merchant's wife of the Middle Ages.

'Does not the Graf count a Fugger among his ancestresses?' asked Fra. 'How interesting for her latest descendant by marriage! I hope nobody will take it as a model, for modern lungs could not stand a dog's couch. Ah! there is the

Graf himself,' as the familiar figure was seen stalking through relics of ivory and ebony towards the group. Surely familiarity had bred contempt with Fra even for her Graf, since she addressed him the moment he came near—swelling with triumph and family pride in seeing Mary examining the trophy of the Felsberg's old ally: 'Herr Graf,' said the irreverent Fra, 'how did your ancestress breathe in a dog's couch?'

The Graf, who was never good for a joke, was seriously offended, and withdrew sulkily.

But he forgot the offence when, at the *table d'hôte* that day, one of the dishes was a preparation of boar's flesh, and Mary, willing to make amends for her sister's wanton rudeness, said that the sight of it recalled to her mind the translation of a German song which she had read in honour of the beast and his slayer, and in which cups were quaffed in succession—

To him who slew the great wild swine
One princely cup we pour;
And another from the sunny Rhine
We drink to the mighty boar.

Sometimes Mary was fain to turn from the white art palaces with their gilded ceilings, their marble staircases, their endless frescoes without and within; she was induced to leave behind her the Hof Garten, with its arcades having their faded frescoes and King Ludwig's own distiches;

the colossal statue of King Max which, all the time that the Carterets were in Munich, bore, in honour of some recent festival, great wreaths of flowers slung on back and breast; the very post-office with the red horses from Pompeii pawing its façade; the theatre, as a matter of course, with its muses presiding over the chosen home of tragedy and comedy, to stray—not in search of the stone giantess Germania in the Teresien meadows, but all about old Munich. Here were old churches and a fine old Marien Platz and Marien Saule, commemorating anew the fall of Protestantism in Bohemia after the battle of ‘the White Hill.’ Here was the old Rathhaus with its tower and its ancient clock supported by figures in Tyrolean hats.

As Mary looked at the last, a dark handsome lad in a similar hat, wearing a scarlet vest and a blue coat, and having cotton cloth wound round his legs, passed her. He was followed by two women of a cast of face which the Carterets occasionally encountered in Munich. It was removed in a marked manner from that of the buxom Bavarian women whom Mary saw here, reduced—without any trace of degradation in their aspect, however—to serve as bricklayers’ assistants, and to carry great hods of mortar to the builders. This contrasted physiognomy was clearly cut and delicate, both in the tint of its olive brown and in the shape of the features.

It might have belonged to the mixed races of Vienna, to the residents in the Italian Tyrol, or to the Italians themselves. It had no affinity with pure German attributes.

Before the new Rathhaus, brave in carved figures, stood the beautiful old bronze fountain of the Fischbrunnen; near it was the house where Gustavus Adolphus had slept.

Faded frescoes occurred anywhere—midway or far up the irregular houses. A saint like St. Cristopher, with the name ‘Onephierus,’ showed dim in a strong sunshine. An ‘Ascension of the Lord,’ and a Virgin and Child, no longer staring, but faint and pathetic with age, came next.

In an arcade hung garlands of bays and palm leaves in bronze, part of a trophy in bronze of helmets, flags, guns, and drums, around white marble tablets, bearing in fresh gilt, and red and black letters the names of the Bavarian regiments engaged in the late Franco-German war, and the soldiers who fell in its battles.

The road went under the old Rathhaus tower. In the brown arch there were stalls with gaudy earthenware and homely haberdashery. On the other side two figures of knights did duty in supporting the reverse dial of the clock.

At the head of the curious broad street of the Thal was the Church of the Holy Ghost, where Mary found, instead of artists and tourists, tradesmen’s wives and country women, with their

baskets beside them, praying among the tattered blue and crimson banners and before the glittering altar. The farther end of the Church was employed as a passage from street to street, yet, in spite of its worldly use, it retained its dingy religious pictures, and its seats, that the wayfarer might rest, meditate, and pray. On the whole, Mary liked this resort much better than that shrine in the magnificent old Frauen Kirche where the humble peasant-born Virgin came out startlingly like a fine lady, in a small image clad in white satin, lace, and pearls.

Among the weather-worn effigies and paintings of the Virgin at corners and in niches in the Thal, looking as if it belonged to them, was the rude representation of a deer standing on its hind legs belonging to the small Gasthaus of the 'Bock.' Shallow arcades or booths ran back from the main street, and served as open shops and restaurants where men and women sat, ate sausages and drank beer, and saw what was going on in the street without. One was a forge, and threw a red glare over its company. Into the adjacent tin-shop a quiet elderly English couple, who appeared the same day at the *table d'hôte*, had stumbled, seeking to strike a bargain for a padlock. Mary took in the whole scene at a glance—her puzzled country-people, the brawny tinsmith displaying the choice of heavy padlocks, his sharp-faced, eager wife—the shopwoman holding up the fingers of both hands to indicate the amount in kreutzers.

Beyond lay the Isar Thor, a gateway of yellow plastered stone. It proved to be double, with a vaulted arch between, the arch bearing a fresco of the Crucifixion. On the other side were more of the everlasting Munich frescoes, illustrating a royal entrance into a German city, with coats of arms round the side towers of the gateway.

Returning by the narrower Bergstrasse, with its good old houses, near the top, next a picturesque yellow house, stood a large white house, alas! restored. It was ornamented with the names of Mozart's operas inscribed across the front, and a medallion head of the composer in brass fixed there. It was here that the handsome joyous young genius, Wolfgang Mozart, lived for a season and worked. Here he wrote his 'Idomeneo,' and made his delighted, affectionate, boyish preparations to welcome his old father and his sister Nannerl to witness his opera and share in the gaieties of the Carnival.

Just beyond, in its square, stood the great old house of the 'Alte Hof,' the oldest palace of the Dukes of Bavaria, erected more than seven hundred years before. It showed three most picturesque bow windows, placed the one above the other, and beginning and ending in high stone peaks.

CHAPTER XLIII.

BACK IN DRESDEN—THE KÜNSTLER BALL AND THE
THÜRINGER JÄGER.

THE Carterets were once more established in the Bürgerwiese, while some of them were forced to recognise—as most of us have to acknowledge in our day—that the care which they had fled from had not only borne them company in their summer wanderings, but had returned in threefold force to rob the approaching winter of the peace of its predecessor.

The faces of the Immortals in the great picture gallery seemed to Mary to have changed for her since she saw them last. Mary of Egypt stood by her open grave with another meaning in her eyes; St. Rodriguez held his palm of martyrdom, triumphant over his death-wound, with stronger significance; and rising above them all—above Albrecht Dürer's figure of solitary anguish in the Crucifixion, and his rabble rout round the one kingly head on the Dolorous Way—there walked on the clouds, borne in a meek woman's arms, the Divine Child, a type of the loving will of God.

The autumn passed into winter, snow had fallen, the country women who came into the market wore their thickest hoods and jackets. The droschky-drivers, in their blue and red livery, slapped their chests like true John Bulls to rouse the blood in their benumbed fingers.

The flocks of blue and white pigeons and russet sparrows came more assiduously than ever, and hovered round the shoulders or perched on the anointed head of Friedrich August, or of the hardly less formidable Electress Anna, waiting for stray grains. All the innumerable Vereine were in active operation. The King and Queen, with their court circle, had returned long ago to their palace in the heart of their town by the Elbe.

The season and the people of all degrees only waited for the freezing of the river to begin that cheery course of innocent winter gaieties, setting cold and darkness at defiance, which are the pleasant distinction of a German winter. For the humblest of the people and the children there were their share of the crisp air above, the crisp snow below, the glittering ice with all its special jovialities, the Christmas stalls in the Alt Markt, the Christmas Eve, with its illuminated green fir-trees, its gifts, and its memory of the Christ Child.

For the better classes there were such singing and dancing as northern nations have reserved for winter since the days when men worshipped the god Thor.

One of the annual festivities was the painters' ball, to which, as it was intended to be confined to artists and their families, admission for ordinary people could only be obtained by favour. But, since artists are as a rule not churlish of their favours, and as the outside world, especially the world of idle strangers, showed itself desirous to join in the purely artistic frolic, the company was rather more extensive and varied than the society of painters justified.

But great and small among the guests had to submit to the society's rules, which were wise enough to deserve a far wider circulation. It was such a masque ball as the Dresdeners delighted in ; at the same time it was to be a masquerade of the simplest, humblest description, not to exceed the means of the most penniless aspirant to fame who was in the habit of trudging many a long day, with his sketch-book in the knapsack on his back, to catch a glimpse of a mountain peak, an old castle, or a group of charcoal-burners, which he might transfer to canvas.

Nay, the poorest artist was to have the exquisite gratification of condescending to play at frugality and rusticity to which his own were luxury and refinement.

Everybody went in peasant costume ; nothing finer or costlier was permitted by the rule of the feast ; and peasant's fare and peasant's treats of gingerbread and Kirschwasser formed the refreshments of the guests.

The fun of the scene—and it was great to the simple-hearted Germans—consisted in the strict observance of another obligation, that of preserving the humble characters adopted, and speaking in their racy patois till the close of the evening.

Certainly, if the Dresden Künstler ball lacked the splendid pageantry and the strong contrasts which might reasonably be supposed dear to every Künstler, it was happy in scrupulously avoiding the danger of paying too dear for its whistle, and in having a unity and a wit all its own; it was altogether free from the motley jumble of incongruities and the sheer folly which form the bane of far more pretentious entertainments.

Mr. Carteret easily procured admission for his daughters that they might see the occupants of the first ateliers in Dresden proclaiming their brotherhood with the most obscure dauber in their ranks, and bringing their wives and daughters to establish something like a sisterhood for one evening, at least, with the wives and daughters of struggling men, failed men, drawing-masters, copiers on porcelain, providers of studies for schools and for amateur artists, to whose scant resources the gala was still perfectly practicable. Rich and famous, poor and unknown, alike were capable of making sport in peasant guise.

Mary and Fra only were to go with their father according to the first arrangement. Lyd had stayed at home until now, while Fra, under

the wing of the Gräfin von Hersfeld, had resumed her old career of pleasure with additional zest, since she had begun it this year in time to secure the cream of the winter festivities. But Lyd seemed to have finally thrown off the old allegiance to the sister next her in age in steadily resisting every inducement to make one in those sledge drives and skating matches—wherein Fra's pretty face and slight figure looked so charming in her fur cap and fur jacket, or in the dances and private or public operas, concerts, and theatricals which were sure to end the day's proceedings.

Lyd not only showed herself capable of fidelity in the one-ideal frame of mind to which she had always been limited, and the expression of which was now a tenacious clinging to her love and its disappointment—the poor child could not be persuaded to do anything save make a duty of her absorption, and to reject on principle every effort to divert her from it.

The consequences of this persistent moping, together with Mrs. Carteret's solicitude, were to a considerable extent what Fra had announced as a likely result in the case. Lyd drooped in body as well as in mind, became, from a healthy girl, more and more really delicate, and inflicted on her father the grief of dreading her premature decline.

Under the circumstances, it was hailed as a favourable sign when Lyd announced a wayward

inclination to be present with her sisters at the Künstler ball, where the gaiety was of so harmless a description that even a confirmed invalid might have sipped a draught of it without injury. Lyd had seen the peasants' dresses prepared for her sisters, and taken it into her head that she would like to appear for a few hours in such another.

'Very natural that you should think of going, Lyddy,' said her father, cheerfully; 'I can tell you it is a wonderfully animated and comical sight. I'll bring you home whenever you are tired.'

'The child is getting up her spirits,' he said, in a pleased, confident aside to Mary; 'we shall have her all right again presently. It was not to be supposed that she could continue pining for such a fellow as Baron Sandor.'

But Mary did not agree with him. The dresses which she and Fra were to wear had been modelled on an acquisition of Fra's of a real Tannenthal holiday costume, made during the early days of the Carterets' stay in the Thuringian Valley, when Fra had amused herself by shaping her heart,

With woman's meekness,

to the exigencies of the situation. Mary believed that the mere sight of it had made Lyd sick with longing to see others like it, to hear again the faintest patois in which she had taken lessons

from Baron Sandor, to have a chance of fancying herself for one enchanted moment back in the primitive forest region of Schloss Rudener.

After all, the momentary gratification need not do any great damage to Lyd, while the contact with the gaiety of which she used to be so fond, the chance of an encounter with some of her young acquaintances, might stimulate her to a healthier temper.

The scene was indeed very curious and lively. The would-be peasants made up for their simple surroundings by the hearty glee which they appeared to have borrowed, along with their suits, from a more unsophisticated class of society than that to which the artists by right belonged. Neither did they fare ill personally by the fate which confined the masquers to rustic apparel, and which only sunk their identity in ruder conditions. Mary had never seen comelier German women in a toilet which set off their attractions to greater advantage than in the case of these professed Altenberg, Eisnach, and Pirna peasants. The bright full skirts, wide aprons, black or white bodices with silver ornaments, little black caps (in the costume adopted by Mary and her sisters, rising in a high peak above the forehead), and plaited hair, made up a picturesque whole. As for the men, if they had to depend greatly on knee-breeches, gaudy vests, silver buttons, shoe buckles, and grotesque pipes for variety in their

attire, at least they managed to escape the distressing shame-facedness which besets their English brethren when they sport the court dresses of their ancestors, or have a small ambition to shine as Richard Cœur de Lion or Henry of Navarre.

There was no assumption of false tones in speaking any more than of the concealment of dominoes or masks; in fact, no disguise was intended farther than the curious inadvertent alteration produced by the substitution of the peasant '*Tracht*' for the ordinary coat or gown. Inter-course, even for those who zealously fulfilled their rôles of foresters, raftsmen, mechanics, market-women, country servants, etc., was to those who had often practised it before not very difficult or stilted. But, to heighten what illusion existed, a room was fitted up to represent a village fair, with booths, swings, merry-go-rounds, raffles, and dances in full force.

There the first historical painter in Dresden, in the guise of the village innkeeper, ladled out 'mehl suppe' to his own wife and daughters and those of the great animal painter.

The humblest flower painter present was still happier in dispensing his fairing of oranges, in the appropriate costume of a gardener, to his *Braut* in the character of a washerwoman.

The man who had been in Rome and was an authority on all classical subjects, and who was there as a rough herdsman, swang rather bois-

terously a dapper tailor, who was in reality the painter of revolutionary proclivities who delighted in painting interiors of huts as they were, and had his own ideas on light and shade.

Mary was not so *au fait* to the different patois as to be able to follow closely the hail of jokes and quizzes, roguish allusions to Hans and Grete, and quotations of ludicrous experiences which their authors relished so highly; but she could appreciate cordially the spirit of the performance.

Fra turned up her fine little nose. But Lyd was fairly amused, and allowed herself to be drawn into making purchases from her old teacher, figuring as a toyseller, and into what was more alluring still—helping him and his wife to sell their stock-in-trade in a manner which Mary had hardly looked for. The sight of the two-storeyed calico mantle, long basket, and black head-kerchief of a *Botenfrau*, or of the green coat and cap of a *jäger* with the sound of the jargon of the wearers—the original sentimental attraction to Lyd—had certainly not proved too much for her; they had rather worked like a charm upon the girl.

Mary recognised many acquaintances under their transformation mingling with the artists. With a few exceptions the former were more from the Gottessegen set than from the Countess von Hersfeld's circle. But Taff Penryn did not put in an appearance in the leathern apron of a smith with a horseshoe in his hand, as, to tell the truth, Mary

had been fool enough to count upon his doing. Neither did the Graf von Felsberg—who had arrived in Dresden for the winter and for the prosecution of his long suit—show himself with the gun and the game pouch of a hunter slung across his shoulder.

Unexpectedly, Mary detected Herr Mönch in a striped nightcap, shouldering the axe of a woodcutter, and learned from him that he possessed a nephew an artist, who had given him the opportunity of being present.

The chemist was quite friendly to the young English lady whom he had always admired, and yet it struck Mary that he was chary of his communications with regard to a common friend. Not only did he refrain from speaking of Bruss and Wallaice, doubtless regarding the names of the heroes of his English studies as out of keeping in the mouth of a Saxon woodcutter, he avoided all reference to his pupil, Taff Penryn, some casual mention of whom he might easily have brought in without loss of character.

Mary's heart failed her at this reticence; but the effect of the failure was to cause her to say, with simulated boldness, to the woodcutter, 'Does Herr Penryn ever pay you for his faggots? I am sure he must be a good customer.'

'*Ya wohl,*' answered the old man, with a dryness that counterbalanced the twinkle of his eye, 'Herr Penryn lays in much wood; it is the

only useful article, except gas, he lays in. I think he must mean some of it for his coffin ;' and he made a motion to turn away.

Mary let him ; she did not wish to hear any more of Taff Penryn's burying himself in his dreams and researches—until even a friendly festival like this could not draw him forth—causing his friends to fear for his life as well as for his reason, and tempting those who guessed the truth to reproach her because she had not merely failed to prevent, she had helped to provoke the catastrophe.

Mary looked a little bitterly at the mock peasants around her. If she and Lyd had been peasants in truth, even with peasants' burdens, how much simpler and easier their lots might have been for them. Her old complaint of the growing spiritual poverty and hardship of the life of the women of the upper classes, which had caused her to covet in preference the bodily toil of the women labouring in the Grosse Garten on the day of the Corso-Fahrt, still more of the old woman sawing wood with her comrade opposite Albrecht Dürer's house in Nuremberg, came across her with fresh force.

Mary was yet in the fair room ; she had just caught a glimpse of Lyd hurrying to join in the waltz with a man in the dress of a jäger, and Mary had said to herself, with some scorn in the reflection, that she might spare her lamentation for Lyd, since her cure had evidently begun, and

would doubtless prove speedy and complete, when a commotion was visible among the dancers. Somebody was ill; a lady had fainted. The next moment Mary saw Lyd carried out of the throng like one dead, and in the same instant she recognised that her sister's stalwart supporter, whose heavy face had become wellnigh as blanched as Lyd's own, with mingled sorrow, consternation, and self-reproach, was Baron Sandor, got up as a jäger.

The Carterets were not a fainting family. Mary had never seen any of them faint before; and the spectacle of Lyd, looking as she would look in her coffin, filled the sister who had been disparaging her a moment before with a sharp pang of dismay and tender remorse.

It was all that Mary could do to conceal her feelings, in order to be of service to Lyd, and to soothe the anguish of her father, who was already apprised of what had occurred, and was hurrying up, as helpless as he was wont to be helpful—as useless as men generally show themselves in such circumstances.

Fra was in the adjoining room, and was not aware of what had happened till the others were on their way home; for Lyd soon came to herself, and, though shaken and weak, was able to be removed. Her father and sister were engrossed with her present condition to the extent of seeking no explanation, and making no observation on the cause of her illness.

Mr. Carteret, as well as Mary, had seen and recognised Baron Sandor, and had arrived at the conclusion that the shock of the meeting, unpremeditated on Lyd's part, had overcome her in the weakened state of her nerves. But neither of the two, in their anxiety for Lyd, had stopped to upbraid the young Baron. They had hardly even paid any heed to his self-abasement and the half-choked gutturals of his regrets and apologies. He had not meant it; he had but seized a chance to see her; he had intended to call upon Herr Carteret on the following morning.

If anyone was the wiser for Baron Sandor's bungling attempt at expressing his compunction because of the harm he had done, and at the same time of exculpating himself from any suspicion of deceit which might have compromised Lyd, it must have been Lyd herself. She leant back trembling until her teeth chattered, and with tears of exhaustion forcing themselves out from beneath her closed eyelids, but still with ears for her lover's rough voice, and even with a feeble little hand put out to clasp his and detain him as he left them.

Lyd could not be spoken to while she was crying weakly throughout the drive back to the Bürgerwiese.

Mr. Carteret was very kind and gentle to his daughter, as to a child suffering from the naughtiness for which it is hardly accountable;

yet he groaned audibly, which was a strange thing for him to do. Mary thought, if she had been Lyd, and had been conscious of these groans, they would have pierced her heart as sharply as her lover's sighs. Lyd was given over to her mother, and nothing was to be spoken or thought of, in the meantime, save her complete revival.

Mary heard, the first thing in the morning, that Lyd was better, and that her father was engaged before breakfast with a visitor in his study.

It was a great shock to the elder sister to be told, half an hour afterwards, by her father and mother in council, that Mr. Carteret had consented to Lyd's marriage with Baron Sandor.

'There is no help for it, Molly,' said her father abruptly, and almost with bravado, to hide the struggle it had cost him, 'unless I am prepared to see your sister die before my eyes. Even your mother has condoned the offence of the bridegroom's not having his dilapidated Schloss all to himself.'

'The poor old Baron is to be the only relative remaining, however,' said Mrs. Carteret with decision. 'That absurd story of Madame Marck's marriage has no foundation. She has at last agreed to take her niece, Baroness Gisela, altogether, and provide for her so far as the aunt can.'

'I don't think Lyd would have objected to having Gisela with her, or would have been the

worse for her sister-in-law's company,' said Mary, speaking, naturally, in the interests of sisters and of single women, feeling how hard it must be for poor Gisela, who had been so devoted a daughter and sister, to be thus summarily set aside and disposed of. Gisela might have made up her mind to it—in her unselfishness might have desired nothing better than to be got out of the way—in order not to interfere with her brother's promotion by marriage, still it was an ungracious requital of her faithful services.

'My dear, you do not understand, no girls do,' said Mrs. Carteret, with her matron's superiority, which she was not reluctant to assert over her eldest daughter. 'Such an arrangement might have been all very well at first, but I could never have consented to it as a permanent thing. Of course, the Schloss is the old Baron's, he has the best right to its shelter, and neither will his ownership last very long in the course of nature. That is quite a different matter.'

'In short, Mary, your mother has the old idea of Lyd's being "sat" upon by the presence of any more of Baron Sandor's relations than can be helped. She is right in this respect, that the couple will need every farthing of their income for themselves. This is the very poorest marriage which a girl in Lyd's rank could have compassed, such as is not to be thought of out of Germany; but I do not say that she might not have done worse.

I may tell you that one inducement with me to play the fool and give in to the young people, is what the fellow came to Dresden to talk to me about, as well as to get a look at Lyd's baby face. I hope he is properly sorry for the change he has wrought in it—I think he is a little—but I suppose he is also proud, after the manner of egotistical lovers. Well, the nearest Freiherr to Schloss Rudener, who possesses three times the Baron's remnant of forest and meadows, though he cannot trace so long a descent, has asked the young Baron to undertake the management of his estate for an indefinite time, since the owner has another place in Silesia and has made up his mind to reside there. "Our Baron," as Fra would call him, has had the sense and honesty to accept the office, which will double his income, and that is not saying very much after all, but it is a testimony that the fellow is well thought of among his neighbours. Of course, I shall have to give Lyd at once what I must have laid aside as a future provision for her. I cannot pretend that it is convenient, but what man's daughters or would-be sons-in-law calculate his convenience or inconvenience?'

'I am very glad,' said Mary. 'I believe that Lyd would have been at her best and happiest as Baron Sandor's wife, even when he was, by your account, twice as poor as he is now. Some natures do not suffer from poverty, and, to a simple girl

like Lyd, there is the greatest gain in such a primitive life as that at Schloss Rudener. I can heartily congratulate Lyd.'

Mary was glad ; but in the depth of her heart there was a rebellious voice which said, This is a concession made to weakness and stupidity, which strength and generosity could never obtain, even though they sought it with all their might. Lyd has been weak, and has consented to let herself and her disappointment in love be a trouble to all of us since summer, and so she is rewarded by having her own way. Baron Sandor is slow and stupid, and there is a safety in well-disposed slowness and stupidity which causes his friends—among the rest papa—to trust him as they would never trust a man of invention and enterprise. Even his clumsy manœuvre to see Lyd again at the Künstler Ball, and to find if she still cared for him, before he committed himself by another appeal to papa, is freely forgiven him, just because it was so transparently foolish.

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE EVIL FORCE OF A BAD EXAMPLE.

FRA was highly indignant, for this among other reasons, that she had not had a finger in the pie of the reversal of Mr. Carteret's sentence and the betrothal of Lyd; but, as Fra judged, she had many other quite sufficient reasons for her displeasure. 'What can papa and mamma be thinking of to consent to such a deplorable marriage for one of us? Of course Lyd has lost her senses; and, if I had thought she would not find them again, it would have been long indeed before I had persuaded Strephon and Chloe into philanthering, just to see how the geese would look in the Tannenthal. Lyd will be lost to us. I, for one, will never visit her. Who would be the young lady in a country house where one might be asked to cut up vegetables—I have seen Gisela doing it—where the gentlemen sit in Schlafrocks—where there are no visitors younger or more dashing than some antediluvian old baron or rustic diplomat—and where fox-and-lambs stands for billiards? It was all papa's fault, burying us for months in that howling wilderness of a forest.

We shall be objects of pity in Dresden for this marriage; and Lyd, like the little imbecile she is grown, has no idea of concealing it to the last moment, but is eager for the poor, deluded old souls, papa and mamma, to flaunt the news in the Dresden newspapers in the usual form: "We have to announce the betrothal of our daughter, Lydia Carteret, to the hochwohlgeborenen Baron Sandor Rudener. John and Frances Carteret." Oh, dear! I have been looking forward to such a different announcement—of a marriage which would have been an honour to the family. How can you be so wickedly indifferent to the family credit, so cruelly tiresome, Polly, as to let this wretched affair take place instead? The only excuse that can be made for it, is to say that it is part of a family arrangement.'

And Fra audaciously made that statement—whenever there was any allusion to the approaching marriage, which was making a considerable stir in the world beyond the immediate friends of the bride and bridegroom. The notorious fact that the Graf von Felsberg had sustained a refusal, conditional or otherwise, from one of the Miss Carterets had established for them and their father and mother a doubtful reputation of being strongly impressed by their own claims, and difficult to please in the question of suitors. The information that Lyd was about to marry, with the consent of the authorities, the poorest baron on the roll of the Saxon nobility was at first incredible,

and then interesting, because of the puzzle it contained, to quite a wide circle.

Perhaps the Mad Graf had heard of Fra's statement, as well as of the marriage with which it had to do. Certainly he was not aggrieved, as Fra had once dreaded, because of the proposed alliance, which threatened to convert his poverty-struck cousin into his impecunious brother-in-law. (But Fra did not allow due importance to the strength of family ties, even where the remotest cousinship is concerned, in Germany.) He was moved to concoct an elaborate speech to address to Mary in that mother-tongue to which she stuck fast when the Graf was present. 'You and me are to be relations, Mees Carteret. For me, I shall not be contented until we are the nearest of the relations. Yes, my Cousin Sandor is a happy man, but I mean still to be a more happier man.'

'I hope you will be a happy man, Herr Graf,' said Mary frankly, under the influence of her late relenting and of the future relationship. 'I see nothing to prevent you, if only you are reasonable in your search after happiness.'

'What call you reasonable, mein gnädigstes, Fräulein?' asked the Graf, eagerly.

Mary was forced to answer, on the spur of the moment, in a version of

Go teach the orphan boy to read,
And teach the orphan girl to sew

of which the Graf had never heard. 'In the first

place, I would see that everybody at Felsburg, and Buchwald, and the Sophienlust—I believe you have a great many men and women at all these places dependent on you—were well off and contented, and then I should trust to become happy in their happiness.’

The Graf bowed and looked blank ; but, to her consternation, she heard next day that he had set out, in the depth of the winter, on a flying visit to each of his seats in succession. Thus she gathered that she must be careful of tendering him advice in future, lest her benevolence should be misunderstood and her pupil, not unnaturally, set a price on his obedience.

Mary comforted herself that no cousinship between the Rudeners and the Graf, with the friendly connection which it established, any more than Fra’s talking—nothing but the treachery of her own heart—could draw her by degrees into filling what was still to her the unenviable dignified post of Gräfin von Felsberg.

Lyd was as happy as the day was long, as if not a care from lack of means existed on this earth. She was recovering her health and bloom as if by a marvel, in the height of her happiness, more rapidly than her mother would consent to. Mary could not refuse to grant that there was something very sweet in the spectacle of Lyd’s unclouded happiness, even though it was largely destitute of forethought and consideration. Lyd

was really incapable of weighing the cost of it. She did not mean to hamper her father still more in his difficulties for her gratification. It was very likely that her only chance of knowing and valuing all that he and her mother were willing to do for her, lay in the maturing and perfecting of her womanhood, when, in the fulfilment of its highest functions as wife and mother, simple Lyd might grow wise with the heart's wisdom and apprehend clearly what was now dark to her.

Neither could Mary deny that Baron Sandor, though neither rendered brilliant nor graceful by happiness, was yet manly and modest in his sincere attachment to Lyd—and that was, perhaps, more to the purpose for Lyd's ultimate peace. Undoubtedly, he deserved some compensation for his impoverished youth and for his faithful struggle with hard odds.

As for Gisela, she was the most agreeable instance one could contemplate of cheerful self-abnegation. It was true, Madame Marck looked up almost superstitiously to her niece, the Baroness, that Madame herself had ceased to be; still, Madame was no more than a worldly minded, tiresome old woman.

Gisela was giving up the old father whom she doted upon, the old nurse who had brought her up, the brother whose comrade she had been till then, with troops of friends, all the more bound to her because they were none of them

of the smallest consideration in the world. She was renouncing the dear old home which, though it had been going to ruins, and was of little moment to any living soul except the Rudeners and their dependents, was the only place in the world where Gisela's personal defects and her poverty were forgotten—where she was the liege lady and the darling.

Contrasted with Gisela, Mary felt herself churlish, and it pained her sorely in her inmost heart to be grudging where little Lyd's happiness and well-being were concerned. It was the shadow of the loss sustained by others falling across Mary's path which made her grudge her sister's and Baron Sandor's gain.

There was nothing to delay Lyd's marriage, and the preparations for it were going on apace. Mary was the more engrossed by the family bustle because little help was to be got from Fra.

Mary had gone out alone, intent on some of the innumerable commissions and purchases which were always on hand at this time, and which cumbered the Carterets a little, because of the reduction of the old household staff they had maintained, as a matter of course, at the Warren.

The weather, though it was already early spring, was still not only severe but stormy, with the extreme rigour of a northern winter. A bitter north-east wind had been blowing, which, more than the snow that had fallen, had driven

many of the skaters and sledge-drivers from their haunts, and thinned the people in the streets.

But Mary was not a German girl to remain glued to the stove when she could not skim along the ice. She was hardy with the English hardiness which can face all weathers, and which will walk for the mere love of the exercise, even when there is no pressing inducement, and no whirl of winter gaiety to call her forth. Fenced against the bitter blast by her cloak and hood, with her feet in snowboots and her hands in a muff, Mary rather enjoyed the exercise which took her as far as the Schloss Platez.

When she was coming back, "along Prager Strasse, she perceived a gentleman with the collar of his coat turned up to his ears, and his hands thrust into his pockets, still more indifferent than she was to the state of the atmosphere, and with so much spare time on his hands that he was prompted to stand staring in at the window of one of the print-shops. At the second glance she saw that it was Taff Penryn.

She had hardly met him since they had parted at Nuremberg—never since Lyd's marriage was made up. Mary's inclination was to pass him with a colder greeting than they had yet interchanged, for her heart had long been swelling with the proofs which he had given that he was sufficient for himself.

But she was unable to preserve her intention

when he turned, hailed her with friendly cordiality, and in order to prolong their interview started, without permission asked, to walk along with her. She was confused, not only from the surprise of coming upon him dawdling there, but with a transformation which she felt but could not explain, and which she was conscious had passed over the whole man. She had heard of him—not so long ago, as more madly devoted than ever to the pursuits which were likely to strip him of the little income he could earn, and reduce him to abject poverty. She had often fancied him, to her misery, thus brought low, yet with his stanch spirit unbroken, labouring from morning till night, gaunt and hollow-eyed—in a coat to which his former threadbare coats would have been as the best specimen of Poole's art—in a bare room furnished with nothing save spectrelike rudimentary machinery.

On the contrary, here he was idling at noon, staring in at shop windows, but in no danger of being frost-bitten, since he was clad as Mary had never before seen him—in a handsome fur coat, which set off his soldierly figure and the manly brown of his face with the child's flaxen locks above it. Mary almost thought he looked fat; undoubtedly he was 'fair' in the proverbial combination of the words, and, as unmistakably, he was beaming with new hope and confidence.

A wild idea flashed across Mary's mind for a

moment that Taff Penryn had discovered perpetual motion, and the whole world was on the eve of a grand change. But he was only saying, 'I have never offered you my congratulations,' with a slight accent of complaint in his exultation, 'though all the world is talking of your sister's approaching marriage.'

'There is not much to talk about,' answered Mary, sedately; 'it is to be a very quiet marriage. I dare say you have some idea, from what you saw and heard in the Tannenthal, how very poor Lyd has elected to be; but as it is her own choice, and as riches are not everything, I trust she will also be very happy.'

'*Gewisz, gewisz,*' he said, with the use of German words in his English conversation which he always made when he was earnest and excited, 'why should not such a marriage be the happiest of the happy? nay, why should it be quiet—I mean without rejoicing—because it is poor? I approve highly of Miss Lyd's choice. I know nothing of Baron Sandor Rudener, but I am sure he is all right, as we English say. Do you know what I was looking for in that window?' he added, with boyish glee. 'An engraving for her room at the Schloss! I did not send any of you an offering for your Christmas-tree—I don't know whether you missed it—but I thought it was better to appear unkind. I was very down-hearted as well as very busy at the time. However,

what I wish to say to you now is how greatly I admire your father's disinterestedness and consideration for his daughters.' And before she could thank him, melted as she was by his interest in Lyd's prospects, and by the perfect simplicity with which he ranked himself as one of the family friends, he went on to praise what he called her father's generosity and faith in what was highest and best in human life—in withholding one daughter and disposing of another as he had done—with a fervour that took Mary's breath away, and reduced her to absolute silence. She saw no longer the firm-trodden snow with its last fresh powdering on which she was walking, the familiar shop windows with the ice flowers still unmelted on some of the panes that she was passing; she ceased to feel the tingling sting of the north wind in her face. She was aware she was walking along so blindly and mechanically, it seemed a necessity of the situation that Taff Penryn should give her his arm, as he had done when he escorted her home through the forest after he had delivered her from the persecution of the Mad Graf in the Ringstein. This walk was only a renewal and a natural consequence of the other, which, with all its summer associations of tree-trunks and leafy boughs, olive moss, apple-green bracken, purple fruit, and fitful voices of birds—even to the faint resounding of far away Jodels, and the apparition of the Balsam Träger with his gathered herbs

displayed in a wreath round his hat—came, wafted vividly, across Mary's imagination.

But Taff Penryn's eloquent voice pierced through all the confusion. 'It gives a fellow hope,' he was telling Mary, 'after he had shut out hope; after he had made up his mind to give up a man's best portion. That was worse than the cutting off of the right hand or the plucking out of the right eye, which the Bible requires on occasions, and of which I often thought then. Perhaps it was a greater sacrifice than was lawful; and yet you know I have not held the relinquishment of life itself, in the daring task I have imposed upon myself, too much. But you cannot guess what a vain show and how empty-hearted existence seemed, even with its great ambition spared, after I had been compelled to count and to pledge myself to pay the penalty; you will never understand it, *Herzgeliebt*.'

As if she did not! as if she had not been weighing life without him in the balance against a thistledown for all these weary months! But she could not admit this any more than she could stay the flood of his confessions.

'Now I have a glimpse of another end to our friendship. *Liebchen, Liebchen*, I may win you yet! You have been so good and kind to me, so patient with me when the rest of the incredulous world were prone to be impatient, not caring how I was seeking to serve it. I do not blame it: I

do not work for gratitude, only for truth and for my man's service done as gallantly as may be to my kind. But you were so wistful to penetrate secrets that evade even me, at times, that I have ventured to think—though I can conceive you as magnanimous and merciful as an angel—there must also be some sympathy between us to lead you thus to concern yourself with me and my rash enterprise. If so, no swaggering Graf von Falsberg, no Graf in the empire, would make you happy. You are one of those noble women of whom I have dreamt, who would rather come out and suffer affliction with the few pioneers who are always in the van of the world's civilisation, than be called a king's daughter and enjoy all the pleasures of Egypt for a season. To be the wife of the poorest and least of Christian philosophers is a lot worthy even you, my Mary, and you are worthy of the lot; and I shall glory if I am permitted to give it to you.'

She could not contradict him; she believed him every word, and her silence was fullest consent to him.

This straggling snow-embedded storm-swept Dresden street was the Elysian Fields, the rude icy wind the softest zephyr to them. They had passed the Carterets' house in the Bürgerwiese; they were straying out in the direction of the dazzling whiteness of the Grosse Garten.

He was about to tell her triumphantly of the

success, which, in conjunction with the countenance Mr. Carteret was showing to Baron Sandor's suit, had led him, Taff Penryn, to judge that his own case was not so desperate as he had been faint-hearted enough to conceive it. And he had come to believe that her father, in his noble unworldliness, might be persuaded to 'put the head sheaf' on the early favours he had conferred on the speaker, and the interest he had taken in him, by giving to a poor student this Mary, whom he had refused to the great Graf von Falsberg, just as he was bestowing Lyd on Baron Sandor.

'You have not discovered——' said Mary, shyly hesitating.

'Nothing like it,' he said, shaking his head wistfully; 'hardly a toy of a machine to match some of the old German clocks; but their ingenuity lay in their intricacy, and I have a notion that all great inventions are great in their simplicity, and lie near the surface, strangely overlooked till God and man's time come; like the discovery of America, which waited for Columbus; don't you think so, dearest? But I have hit on an improvement of bobbins in silk weaving. What a downfall—to be searching for perpetual motion, and to find better bobbins for silk weavers!' and he laughed heartily at the collapse.

'Do you remember Mrs. Penfeather?' asked Mary, suddenly, 'a lady whom you met over in England, at the Warren, the first day I saw you?'

‘No; why should I? I don’t even remember noticing you that day.’

‘You should not tell me that; but I thought you might recollect her, because you talked more to her in the drawing-room in the evening than to the rest of us.’

‘Did she know something of Indian dyes and looms?’

‘I am afraid you are possessed,’ said Mary; ‘I am afraid that you will distinguish me in your mind as the woman who was the most inquisitive of her sex, and who gave you the opportunity of airing your theories, since you have already said that I disarmed your prejudices by being a good listener. Yes, you were prejudiced—though you had your ideal, I suppose—against ignorant frivolous girls in general, and against English-women in particular—you need not deny it. Don’t tell me, now, that I have all the good qualities in addition to all the charms under the sun, for of course it is too late in the day, and I must make it a point of honour not to believe you. Do you know you have already likened me to an angel, while I have never even said to you——’

‘What, Mary?’

‘That you are the bravest, most single-hearted man I ever knew, my father not excepted, and that therefore I could not help thinking of you.’

‘Thinking to some purpose, *Herzchen*.’

‘Thinking to purpose, indeed ; do you imagine I would let you say what I have done if I did not care for you, even to forsaking my country and forgetting my father’s house (O papa, papa ! how shall I ever break it to you, how shall I bear to leave you,’ murmured Mary, letting her voice fall into a half-despairing whisper). ‘But you have no one to care for you, Taff Penryn,’ she continued aloud, ‘neither father nor brother, mother nor sister ; and you are so careless of your own welfare that you are a byword to your friends—you know you are. You need not smile, far less try to kiss my hand when I am holding a muff, and we are on a public road, and I am English in my ways ; when, besides, I am wearing two pairs of gloves to keep my fingers from being benumbed. And do you think I shall let you throw away your life, if ever I have anything to say to you, when, if I save you, I save Cæsar to the world ? But you have made me forget what I wished to tell you about Mrs. Penfeather, that she once said of you, on the first night we saw you, which proves what a prophetess she was, that the man who tried to get the moon was sometimes rewarded by securing a gas-lamp for his share.’

‘A gas-lamp is not at all a bad thing,’ laughed the enamoured man, ‘when it does not become the end ; it could never become that to you, any more than to me, Mary, could it, *meine Liebe* ?

and when it is a household light, and shines on a dear family hearth? What a poor short-sighted philosopher, as well as miserable wretch, I should have been, after all, had I been condemned to be a forlorn bachelor. Shall I not work the better for the world because I have you to work for first? Are not the worthiest priests married priests?’

At last he came to the facts from which he was drawing his inferences. He had, with his German habit of minute application, rather than as a momentary pastime, thought out and illustrated the little invention which had occurred to him in his speculations. He had put no weight on it, and hardly spent a thought on it, after he had satisfied himself that it was practicable; but somehow it had got wind, and been talked of among a few inventors and mechanics, until it had reached the ears of some enterprising members of the trade it concerned.

Then he had received business communications—offers to treat with him for the proprietorship of the invention, suggestions about patents, hints of partnerships which might be found open to him—all increasing in urgency and liberality as the benefits of the improvement became more widely rumoured.

He had, by the advice of Herr Mönch, made a bargain with one of the applicants. He had sold, for a thousand pounds—a sum which sounded imposing in thalers—so much of the proprietorship

of his invention as was not included in a secondary interest in its working, which, if the statements of the French firm concerned proved correct, might in itself secure to him a moderate income. He was at once raised above the poverty which, since his grandfather, the professor, died, had been constantly hovering on his doorstep, only staved off, in the middle of his studies, by temporary expedients and spasmodical efforts. He was not rendered an opulent man by the screwing of a bolt or the stroke of a pen, but he had such a fair promise of future independence as might well change the entire current of his ideas and fire him with ardour to claim both his love and his right to be an inventor.

There was another result, though he could not be supposed to appreciate it, which was yet patent to Mary, who believed in him with a belief next to that which he entertained in himself. This faintest glimmer of achieved success, this smallest practical realisation of an idea, lifted Taff Penryn instantly out of the ruck of mere harebrained and muddle-headed dreamers, and gave his ability some value in the eyes of the stolid and sceptical majority of his fellow-creatures. He might still be considered eccentric and wild in his speculations; but he had done something, however small, to justify them, which entitled him to be listened to—granted he was as little understood as ever—with a degree of consideration.

This modicum of consideration—so much are even the most self-reliant men dependent on the sympathy of their brethren—doubled his chance of attaining a greater aim. The contriver of a bobbin, who had established his contrivance, was not only infinitely more respectable in the eyes of the rational world than the man who believed and acted on his belief in the possibility of the discovery of perpetual motion; strange to say, the encouraging sense of increased consideration was an instrument in favour of his thinking out—if not the grand secret—the nearest approach to it.

‘Where are we going?’ said Mary, standing still. The couple had come in view of the open country, stretched out in its robe of stainless white—all unsightliness hidden. The wood of the Grosse Garten was a magic forest of such milky coral branches as divers bring up from the bottom of the sea. The whole scene was as witchingly fair in its very sternness, and as far removed from any ordinary landscape, as a garden, or a river, or sea waves beheld by moonlight. It might have been chillingly unreal and deathly cold in its beauty to the careworn or the unhappy; but there was no chill or coldness in it to the couple who kissed and clasped their first love-pledge in the middle of its peerless surroundings.

CHAPTER XLV.

‘BLAME ME ; LET TAFF PENRYN GO FREE FROM
CENSURE.’

TAFF PENRYN, who was naturally direct in his dealings, and who had a faculty of not seeing obstacles, would have gone straight to Mr. Carteret with his plea, if Mary had not begged a respite for her father, though she was conscious that every act, every trusting or jesting word which intervened, would be so much additional torture to herself.

Yet she was not really guilty of any infidelity towards her father, far less of any betrayal of his confidence in her. She had never loved him more truly than now, when her heart was ready to break at the thought of filling him with dismay, disappointment, and grief. For she had an instinctive knowledge that the vexation which Lyd had caused him, was as nothing compared to that which she was about to inflict on him ; and that her choice of Taff Penryn for her husband would be the greatest blow her father had received, not excepting that which her brothers’ incapacity and failure in life had given him.

She was not conscious that it was any great relief to her distress to believe with all her heart that her father did not do justice, but hastily misjudged Taff Penryn. Neither could she take refuge altogether in the fixed determination, which she was certain Taff Penryn would share with her, of not consenting to receive any assistance from Mr. Carteret in setting up their modest establishment—if it ever came to that. For that matter, Taff Penryn had steadily refused, from the time he was his own master, to be under any money obligation to her father, which would necessarily have fettered his course in life.

Here came in another argument, which, indeed, was not needed, in Taff Penryn's favour. He had not made capital in love, any more than in ambition, of the loyal service which his father had once rendered to her father. He had never even hinted at the knowledge of it, farther than to refer gratefully to Mr. Carteret's having taken a friendly interest in him for the sake of old acquaintance with his father.

Yet it was hardly possible that the elder Taff Penryn, though Mr. Carteret had represented him as a heedlessly generous scapegrace, could have taken the relinquishment of the succession to an estate—though he might have been perfectly aware that if he had got it the land would soon have followed his paternal acres—as so everyday an affair that he should have let it slip out of his

memory altogether. He could scarcely have failed to mention it to his wife, to be communicated by her in time to her son, until the fact remained a proud tradition in the family, waiting to descend to distant generations.

Taff Penryn must have recollected the incident, though he would not allude to it more nearly, this very day, when he said gaily to Mary, in allusion to Lyd's being about to marry a German, 'Your father will not object to your husband's being an Englishman by the father's side, one of your own countrymen the son of an old acquaintance, in fact one of yourselves.' But did it not behove the Carterets to remember all the more tenaciously what the Penryns chose to forget in the dealings between the families?

Mary's original estimation of that gracious deed of Taff Penryn's father had naturally undergone a considerable modification.

Still, with all the valid reasons and powerful excuses which Mary could adduce, she felt as if she would wellnigh have died sooner than grieve her father as she was destined to grieve him. But what could she do? She had no choice left her, or rather the choice lay between her father and Taff Penryn—who had nobody, if Mary gave him up, to cling to and sustain him, to save him from himself, as Mary fondly dreamt she could do, to guard and cherish him until he became a great man and a benefactor of his race.

The time had come of which her father had spoken to her, when a lover—the lover of her life—had come between the father and the daughter, and when the first need of a woman's nature asserted itself and bore down every other. And it was not even as if Taff Penryn were a prosperous man, a worldly magnate like the poor Graf, or rich in relations and friends on whom he had a distinct claim ; it was not even as if he were quite like other men, keenly alive to his own interests, very well able to take care of himself. They might call him ‘Er Kann Alles,’ but he was as simple as a child in many respects, and tempted to be headstrong and reckless. He had grave need of her if ever man had need of a helpmeet in a wife.

‘Go to papa in the evening, Taff,’ Mary had advised her lover when the two had parted ; ‘don’t spoil his day’s occupations. Ah ! but the interview in the evening will cost him his night’s rest ; still I think it will be less hard for him then. He is always at leisure now, but in the evening it is the disengaged tranquil leisure, when tranquillity gets merged in resignation. Unlooked-for troubles don’t jar so horribly at night as in the morning—don’t you think so ? You must not fancy that I am very vain because I infer that it will be an unlooked-for trouble for papa to be asked to give me up ; and you must not be hurt, dear Taff, if papa does not seem—if he is startled

into speaking as if he held you and your career lightly. He has a real regard for you. I have heard him wish that Tom or Regy had been such a one as you—unless, I must own, in your schemes. Papa, like most Englishmen of his standing, has a strong prejudice against natural philosophy—such as people used to have against art—when it serves for a man's calling.

‘Never fear, my friend,’ Taff Penryn assured her cheerfully, ‘that I shall ever consider he prizes you too highly. I will easily forgive his grudging you to me or any man. I am ready to enter into any probation, save one, that he can ask of me. I cannot consent to give up my researches, because that would be to be false to myself, to you, to my Creator who made me as I am.’

‘He will not put you to so cruel a test—he cannot when he sees that, although, you have not sought a livelihood as the first object of your studies, they have brought you that without the asking,’ said Mary, with tears in her steadfast eyes.

‘And will your father have no thought of Stephenson, James Watt, Davy, even of old Roger Bacon, whom his contemporaries called a wizard, if not a madman?’ Taff Penryn could not resist asking, with a little pique in his voice.

‘I cannot tell,’ answered Mary; ‘the last is so very far off that he does not seem to point a moral for anything happening in the present day;

and the rest were Englishmen wholly, some of them thorough business men after the fashion of Englishmen. They had the Royal Society to fall back upon; or they had the honour of knighthood to gild their struggles. Somehow it is different to hear of them and to meet their representative here or elsewhere; and, Taff, I don't know that any of them believed in perpetual motion,' said Mary, candidly.

'You do not know what they believed in, Liebchen; certainly they believed in much which, till they had proved the reasonableness of their conclusions, their fellows held to be sheer folly and rank absurdity.'

When the evening came and brought the expected knock, Mary sat sick with expectation. Her father was already in his study; the others were all happy in their unconsciousness, and their freedom from any participation in a coming disclosure.

Gisela had arrived at Madame Marck's and was with her future sister-in-law; and not only she and Lyd were in the height of interest and animation over some of the arrangements for the approaching marriage—Fra had been tempted to waive her objections for the moment, and was condescending to lend the two others the aid of her cleverness, always provided that she ruled paramount in the discussion. The younger girls were sitting close together, so that their heads met,

while their lively voices were in full chorus, over a pretty confusion of snips of ribbon and lace and patterns of stuffs. Mrs. Carteret was contemplating them amiably from the background, while the lines in her forehead grew smoother as she looked on, and occasionally put her word into the argument.

Mary felt like a guilty creature, excluded by her secret, and oppressed with the crisis which, as far as she was concerned, was hovering in the air.

She looked round on all the details which had grown so homelike: the polished brown boards, the bright rugs, the white stove; in the window the bushy dark-green myrtles, one of which Lyd was guarding jealously. Mary hardly thought that the old crowded drawing-room at the Warren, with its relics of earlier stages of existence and of former generations, would seem so familiar if the Carterets could return to it this night. She had not been constant to the Warren, just as she was proving herself inconstant to the father whose little companion she had been as far back as she could recollect. How proud she had been as child and girl of the distinction which she was ready to relinquish for the sake of a comparative stranger. No, she could not compel herself to call Taff Penryn a stranger; she felt as if she had known him, too, all her life, as if their souls might have had communion in a prior state of being.

Papa will have heard—now he will have

begun to believe Taff's assurances, which will be frank and plainspoken like the man—papa will not be able to doubt long—only to marvel and deplore.

Old and new ties were waging cruel war in Mary's heart, and rending it asunder, when the sound of the front door closing caused her to leap from her seat; the next moment her father opened the door and called 'Mary,' as he had been in the habit of doing a dozen times a day.

Was there a 'fog' of wounded love and stabbed trust in the voice, rendering it hoarse as he spoke; or was it only Mary's fancy while she rose and followed?

He received her standing by the table where they had so often sat and worked together, and she remained standing beside him, with her limbs trembling beneath her. The failure in his customary consideration for women, which made him forget to place a seat for his daughter, showed how incensed and outraged he felt. 'Am I to conclude from what Penryn has been here asserting—with your concurrence, he says'—began Mr. Carteret, abruptly, 'that he has clean lost the wits which were always far enough to seek, or is it you who have gone out of your senses, Mary?'

'Oh! papa,' said Mary, 'don't be hard upon us. In what are we worse than any other couple

who have found that they love each other, and can no longer be happy apart, but would fain go together?’

‘Go together!’ echoed Mr. Carteret, loudly, in his disturbance: ‘marry a madman with a clear delusion which will strip him of every penny he possesses so long as he lives! And you, Mary, on whom I depended as on myself—I thought I knew you as I knew myself—I believed that you had some sense and consideration, for a girl. I had even looked forward to your caring for your mother when I was gone. I have been greatly mistaken. How long have you indulged this outrageous idea, and pray how do you mean to carry it out?’

‘Papa,’ repeated Mary, very humbly for a proud woman, ‘don’t be hard upon me. I am very sorry—no one can tell you how sorry—to cause you grief, and to overturn all your plans. But I love Taff Penryn—I think I began to love him from the first hour that I saw him. I believe he will one day be a great, as he is already a good man, and will live to confer favours on his own and on other generations. Should it be otherwise, should he be doomed to failure as one of those gifted men who are baffled in all they undertake—only that they may serve for a stepping-stone to their successors, as I have sometimes feared he would—I desire nothing better than to strengthen and sustain him in

his failure,' cried Mary, with glistening eyes. 'Oh, papa, is not this a woman's true mission? Can you ask anything better for me? Will you not give me up for this?'

'Child,' said her father, more gently, but still indignantly, 'you are as crazy in your enthusiasm as this young man is in his. I have been very wrong in exposing you to his influence; in Germany, too, of all places. There is one thing, I see—that it is not his presumption and recklessness alone which are to blame for this mischief.'

'Yes, yes, papa,' said Mary, firmly; 'blame me; let Taff Penryn go free from censure; he did his best to keep away from me; he left us at Nuremberg. Oh, how he tried me, by showing beyond a doubt that he preferred his work to me!' Mary could not help turning to her old confidant, her father, with the complaint which at the time she had stifled in her own breast.

But her father was capable in his wrath of using her admission against her.

CHAPTER XLVI.

MR. CARTERET'S PROTEST.

‘WELL, and can you look over such a preference? Are you so blind that you do not see to what it tends? His delusion had such a grip of him that even a lover’s rhapsodies could not hold it in check for the briefest space; and if a mistress was thus forsaken, how will a wife fare when the gambling fit has gained full possession of him?’

‘Papa, papa! you are very unjust,’ protested Mary, passionately; ‘you are not speaking like yourself. What tie that he had not a perfect right to give up, has Taff Penryn sacrificed to his career? What obligation has he failed in? Has he not kept himself honestly and honourably all the while that he has been prosecuting his studies? Has he accepted one farthing that you pressed upon him, and wrested it from the purpose to which you destined it, to aid him in his hardest efforts? Has he not shown unmistakably to all who care to see, that he is no idolater—that although he is persuaded God has raised him up to assist in bringing to light the secret forces of

nature, he respects the bounds which God himself has set? If God will it—but mind, only if God will it—he can be content to stand back and let another lead the army of explorers; or to die and never see the truth revealed here; but then, in God's light, he will see light. Yes,' she said, returning to the question which her father had put to her in the beginning of his speech, and answering it with womanly spirit and dignity; 'I hope I have in me enough nobility of nature, which you, papa, have done so much to plant and cherish, to look over Taff Penryn's preference of his work before me. I do more than look over it—I am proud of it, as the people here are eager to tell that the soldiers' brides during the late war were proud to see their bridegrooms choose their duty before their love; and so the women sent the men to fight, glorying as well as delighting in them.'

'Mary, you are incorrigible,' said Mr. Carteret, turning away, with a sigh, in which there was a mixture of admiration and regret—the soreness of being left behind, and the sting of the consciousness that he himself had forged the weapon which was now turned against him. Was it not a fact that he had entertained similar sentiments, though he had never applied them to Taff Penryn, and had inculcated them all the more sedulously on Mary because his wife had stigmatised them as highflown, and because she had been incapable of receiving them?

‘I did think when you dismissed the Graf von Felsberg with so little ceremony,’ he said, with fresh anger, ‘that you would be a little wiser in your choice, if you were called on to make a choice.’

‘Papa, do you speak of the Mad Graf and Taff Penryn in the same breath?’ demanded Mary, with haughty indignation in her tone.

‘As to the madness, it seems to me that the fellows are six and half-a-dozen,’ Mr. Carteret was provoked to retort; ‘at least the Graf has the means to provide for a wife’s comfort, without which it is an act of gross selfishness in any young fellow to make an offer of marriage.’

‘May not two young, strong, not badly endowed people, marry for love and work for money?’ asked Mary, thinking for a moment of what Kunigunde Grün had said of the highly artificial and luxurious state of society in England which was rendering marriage more and more difficult, and when it was entered upon without all the conventional requirements, more and more disastrous; remembering, too, how Kunigunde had boasted gleefully that she could not have been half so happy in marrying a rich as she was in marrying a poor man.

‘A couple ought not to marry without prudential provision even in the very lowest rank, certainly not in your class,’ answered her father decidedly.

‘Then it is a misfortune to be born in our class,’ answered Mary boldly. ‘I do not see where there is room left for trust in God, or trust in man,

or for any self-denial, save indeed the denying the supply of the first want, that we may hamper ourselves with gratifications for which we have no real need.'

'You are a silly girl—exaggerating, as women are specially prone to do, and carried away by the passion of the moment,' said Mr. Carteret coldly.

'Taff Penryn has told you,' Mary reminded her father, as much to justify her lover as to plead their cause, 'that he has been able to turn one of his inventions—a very little one, to some account, and that he has the prospect of earning an income by it alone. And he can do so many other things, and is so willing, so little ashamed to work,' urged Mary piteously. 'He has often acted as an assistant to a professor at one of the universities; he was assistant-librarian in the royal library here last summer; he can give lessons in mathematics, or mechanics, or chemistry.'

'A Jack-of-all-trades is like the fox with many tricks,' Mr. Carteret suffered himself to sneer; 'all are apt to break down when the pinch comes.'

'And if he did nothing more,' insisted Mary, despairingly, 'he has his share in the profits which his improved machinery ought to bring to the silk firm that has bought the invention and will patent it, I suppose. I don't understand about patents either at home or abroad—I leave that to you, papa,' said Mary, glancing, with the woman's sad little wile of an appeal,

to the father who would not help her, who was standing for the first time in her life in opposition to her. 'His income will be very little worse than that of Baron Sandor, who can do so few things, while Taff Penryn can do so many; and the baron has more claims upon his income.'

'Your parallel is not fair, Mary,' said her father; 'besides Lyd, for whom I made the concession, is a weak, foolish young girl; whereas I imagined that you—but it seems,' he broke off sarcastically, 'I have been labouring under a delusion, like my neighbours, when I fancied that you were strong, and had some reason to which I could appeal, and a high spirit to bear a cross.'

'Then you would yield to weakness what you would not grant to strength. You regard the last as only bestowed for the endurance of the trials which you will not let it have the chance of vanquishing,' remonstrated Mary.

'When you have lived as long in the world as I have done, Mary, you will perhaps find that I have fitly awarded the task which strength has oftenest to do. As for this bobbin affair,' went on Mr. Carteret, relentlessly and contemptuously, 'don't you see that it is a part of the delusion—that these promised profits will turn out so much moonshine, even if the silk weavers are not rogues matched against a fool? We'll hear next of a composition in sand-paper or a contrivance in corks that is to set the Thames on fire.'

‘Papa, I beg your pardon before I say it,’ said Mary, with her cheeks flushing scarlet, ‘but you are neither just nor generous to-night. You are not like yourself. I know you have had great provocation, for which I could beg your pardon on my knees and kiss your very feet if you would let me—I could, papa, and I will never defy you, never. If you forbid me to think further of Taff Penryn I shall submit, though it be to break my heart in condemning him to loneliness in his struggles. But can you forbid me, papa? Have you forgotten that you once owed the Warren and the power of marrying mamma to the good offices of another Taff Penryn? If it had been otherwise, then this Taff Penryn might have had the remnant of his estate and his squire’s position to make him at least on an equality with Baron Sandor, to entitle him to grace in your eyes, and to render him excusable in seeking a wife.’

‘You did not always put the same value on the common justice which Taff Penryn’s father rendered me,’ Mr. Carteret reminded her, ‘and now you ask me to pay it right royally. He gave me back the estate which was mine by right. All the country would have cried shame on him, as he well knew, had he taken it from a prejudiced, doting old woman, and he would have thrown it to the dogs along with his own place in a few years. In return I am called upon to give my daughter, in whose righteousness, reasonableness, and re-

gard for her family I had some faith, to his son—a hair-brained enthusiast, who will never keep a shilling even if he can earn one, but will remove her from her sphere, and reduce her to actual poverty and wretchedness which her greatest enemy could hardly contemplate without a shudder. But let us drop the matter for this night; we have had enough of it for a single bout, enough to cost one of us the heaviest heart he has ever had to bear him company in this sorry world. No, I don't mean to reproach you, child,' as Mary, forgetting all the anger to which his harshness—so strange to her, and his scorn of Taff Penryn had provoked her, hung about him with sobs; 'after all, I suppose you have only acted according to human nature in womankind, though it is human nature bent rashly and recklessly on self-destruction. It is at my own short-sightedness and folly that I am astounded and scandalised.'

Not a whisper of the new suitor whom Mary favoured, was breathed by Mr. Carteret even to his wife that night. The father and daughter who had been 'a pair of friends' kept this secret, as if it were to be their last, between the two for the next twelve hours—until Mr. Carteret had made up his mind to the course he should follow, with his wife's acquiescence.

As Mary hung about in misery next morning—not liking to join her father in his study and offer him her services as she had been wont to do every

day of her life—not liking to fail in the attendance which she had always given, he summoned her again to hear his will. He was cool and collected, even though his face had the purple tinge which it was apt to take after worry that caused sleeplessness and bodily disorder, and he leant wearily back with the manly bulky frame which had become a burden to him since its vigour had departed.

Mary's heart bled to see him. If she could but have united her duty to him with her duty to Taff Penryn—if she could but have ministered to both of them as Lyd would minister to Baron Sandor and his feeble old father! But to how few women, though to more in Germany than in England, is given the blessedness of combining the offices of a daughter's and a wife's love?

On the contrary, so far as Mary was concerned, she did not even dare to approach her father closely in the stern calmness of his disapproval this morning, as she had approached him in the agitation of his anger last night. She felt with anguish, but without revolting from what was inevitable, that a barrier had been raised between them which it would be presumption in her to attempt to break down.

He had placed a chair for her before he had seated himself, and he motioned her to it, and commenced the conversation as if the two were common acquaintances who were treating gravely and impartially the affairs of third parties.

‘I must request you, Mary—I prefer on the whole speaking to you to addressing another person on this question—to tell me what you and Penryn propose to do if you get my consent to your marriage.’

‘We have not settled anything. It was only yesterday that we understood each other. But I think, if we could not venture to take up house yet, I should not be uncomfortable or unhappy living with Fräulein Körner at the Gottessegen. I am sure she would have us—and you like her,’ she added falteringly.

He took no notice of the attempt at propitiation. ‘And allow me to ask, farther’ (‘he speaks as if he were taking a liberty with me in putting these questions, which he has the best right to ask,’ said Mary to herself with a swelling heart), ‘have you cast a glance on the probable—excuse me, the possible, contingency of Penryn’s running short of funds, even for so moderate a board as that wanted in a German *pension*?’

‘I could do something for myself and him,’ said Mary courageously, ‘and I should not be sorry or ashamed to do it. I could give English lessons—Fräulein Körner has a large and good connection; or if you and mamma were still here and did not like it, then we—Taff Penryn and I, could go elsewhere.’

Mr. Carteret could not restrain a groan; and Mary, in spite of herself—notwithstanding her

conviction that there was a great difference between her powers of endurance and those of Lyd, and between the comparative reasonableness of the two sisters' schemes, was reminded of Lyd's suggestion in her tribulation in the Tannenthal, that she might exercise her little gift of painting, and dispose of her pictures—only it was to be done secretly in Lyd's case—to replenish the exhausted exchequer of the Rudeners.

Then Mary had commented ruefully, 'Oh, poor Lyd!' Now doubtless her father held her as blind and childish in her love.

'That is out of the question,' he said curtly; 'you must have more confidence in your own capabilities than I can imagine, if you do not see that this would prove a most lame and impotent resource. Besides, it would be unquestionably disagreeable to us. I have no intention of quitting Dresden, where our vicinity to Lyd in her future home will be a boon both to her and her mother. Such a step as you have spoken of would be specially distasteful, and might prove disadvantageous to Fra; and it strikes me that I am bound to consider specially the likings and welfare of the only daughter who has not gone against my wishes. I have thought of another settlement of the difficulty; for I have arrived at the conclusion, Mary, that I will not oppose any daughter of mine who has come to the years of discretion, and who has deliberately agreed to cast in her lot

with a man against whom I have no moral objection—I even admit that Taff Penryn has a claim upon me—so you must take the consequences of your decision. It was a different matter when I sought to control Lyd, to prevent her throwing herself away on a poor, stupid, uncultivated young man—for my present intended son-in-law is no better. Unfortunately for me, perhaps, I cannot deceive myself in my estimate of Baron Sandor. The sole indemnifying considerations are that he is honest, and has not been a bad son and brother—so probably he will not beat or starve your sister, but be kind to her, and as she is easily contented that may satisfy her. But Lyd was a simple child in years and in character; and therefore I imagined that she might be won from an idle fancy, and taught to forget an unsuitable and a not very attractive lover. Even with regard to her I have found myself mistaken. In the face of such an experience, I confess I have little hope that you, so much older and stronger-minded, can be induced to give up your inclination. I am letting you go your own way, because I have no faith in turning you effectually from it. You may find it to be a perverse and fatal way in the end, but it is only the miserable reaping which will convince you that the sowing has been vain. I think I know you well enough to predict that. You remember the man who took Sandford before we left the Warren? I had a letter from him by the English

mail yesterday. He has fallen into bad health, and is recommended by his doctors to try a change of climate and join a brother in Australia. He wishes me either to take the lease off his hands, or to permit him to sub-let the farm. Kit Must is still there acting as bailiff. You and he have some knowledge of each other and can work together; that is, he can still buy and sell, and undertake all the practical oversight of the farm, while you can check his accounts and give him the benefit of your superior education. You used to say you were sure you could manage a farm in such a fashion—at least as well as any extravagant sporting gentleman farmer. But you will not lack the assistance of a gentleman in the concern, for I have to suggest that you and Penryn be my joint tenants if you think proper. He can carry out his inventions there as well as elsewhere, I suppose; and as he is a universal genius, perhaps he may hit by inspiration on a device for preventing blight in corn, or for keeping off rinderpest—it was the sole sarcasm which he let slip—‘but I would recommend you rather to depend upon the mother wit of Kit Must and on your own judgment, which used to be good for a girl.’

‘Oh, papa,’ said Mary, ‘you are too good; we never meant, we cannot consent, to take anything from you.’

But he stopped her imperatively. ‘Take notice, Mary, it is in the light of tenants that I

suggest Sandford to you. For anything that I know, your agreement to my terms may prove a profitable arrangement, as it may easily be a convenience to me at this crisis. I do not calculate on your failing in the payment of your rent; and supposing you and Mr. Penryn were not disposed to strain every nerve to meet the term day—of any inclination to shirk which I do not however accuse you—I could not if I would grant you a remission beforehand. I am not sitting here to insult my daughter and the man she has accepted for her husband. And in justice to your mother and the rest of my family—I cannot forestall my own death in a second instance and give you your portion as I am giving Lyd hers. Only this I can do without any great loss, if you and Mr. Penryn prove moderately prudent and successful. I cannot tell if there is any occasion for me to add in so many plain words, that I do this, as the sole precaution which I have it in my power to take, to secure you from the indigence and suffering in the future which you are so foolishly braving. Another thing: I wish to break your social fall. In the neighbourhood of Sandford and the Warren you may have some little consideration shown you because of your people, and Taff Penryn will be recognised there as the son of a gentleman, though he was a spendthrift—your father's equal. I confess these trifles have some weight with me—indeed, so much

that without their help I do not know if an objection to tyranny and an inclination to own every grown man and woman's right, under certain limitations, to decide their destinies, would have warranted me in authorising your engagement.'

His stiffly-measured words seemed to wave off thanks, and she did not thrust them on him. But she hastened to propose a modification of his proposal which might meet its generosity half-way, and be agreeable by softening the blow to him, even as he would break the fall to her.

'Papa, you are doing more—far more, than we have any right to expect from you. I only hope you will see yourself, some day, that we are not ungrateful or altogether unworthy; but I will say no more of that. Would it not be more satisfactory to you if I were to try alone for a year how I could manage at Sandford, and ascertain if I should be your solvent and not your bankrupt tenant at the end of twelve months?' she said, with the ghost of a smile on her quivering lips. 'Of course I know I could not live alone there,' she continued; 'but I think mamma's friend, Mrs. Penfeather, who stayed a few days with me there before we left England, would keep me company for a longer time. Mamma heard from her the other day that her plans were unsettled. I know that she likes the country, and I think she did not dislike me.'

He was too sore over the difference between

them, too embittered by her having gone against him at the turning point of her life, too hopeless in his own high sense of honour with regard to any chance of her breaking her engagement, to be appeased by the eager concession, or even to allow himself to show any interest in it. So far from grasping at it, he dismissed it indifferently. ‘You may settle that as you choose; and remember you have another person to consult. If the idea of the connection is to be entertained at all, of which I presume there is no question, it does not seem to me to signify much whether it be fulfilled sooner or later. There is your mother’s consent to be got, no doubt; but though she will regret your misplaced attachment—I cannot call it by any other name—I do not anticipate that she will raise an insuperable objection. Being a warm-hearted, unworldly woman—and your mother, she will probably be more at one with you on the point of your marriage than she could have been on any other.’ He ended with one of the fleeting wintry smiles which were thenceforth to pass between the two, that were almost harder for Mary to encounter than frowns had been. These smiles were little more than a play of the lips, without any sentiment save that of mockery, without either cordiality or pleasure. They were among the strongest tokens of a broken alliance, which had not been severed without anguish, to both the persons concerned.

CHAPTER XLVII.

EVERYBODY'S PROTEST.

THERE had been an impression in the Carteret family, which had been strengthened until it became a conviction, by the circumstances of Mary's refusal of the Mad Graf, that she was not a susceptible woman, and was far removed from a helpless victim of the tender passion.

The enlightenment which burst upon them with the information that she had nourished and was prepared to maintain what they regarded as a wild and wilful passion for the out-at-elbows eccentric student Taff Penryn, had the effect of a moral thunderbolt falling upon the household.

But just as extraordinary and abnormal conditions of the material world develope wonderful changes in reversals of conditions, so it happened, as Mr. Carteret had possessed enough knowledge of human nature to predict, the person who took the tidings best was Mrs. Carteret. The subtle influence of the news produced

a powerful reflex action in her heart, and the announcement which had divided Mary from her father promised to unite her with her mother, by bridging across the gap which had commenced in her babyhood and gone on widening till now.

Mr. Carteret had contented himself with briefly telling his wife the state of matters, which it was exquisitely painful to him to dilate upon ; and she had hastened to her daughter with kindling eyes and a softened voice.

‘My dear Mary, what is this I hear—that you and Mr. Penryn have formed an attachment to each other ? I am afraid it is very unfortunate, as I have always understood that he was not well off ; besides, he has shown symptoms of delicate health, poor fellow !’

‘Oh no, he has never had delicate health, mamma ; his illness was entirely the effect of an accident,’ Mary hastened to explain. She was rather taken aback by her mother’s concise, matter-of-fact version of what had occurred.

‘You do not see it, nor I suppose does he,’ said her mother, shaking her head, and implying that there were clearer eyes to detect signs. ‘And perhaps, if he attend to advice and be very careful, the mischief may be averted. But about your attachment, of course, it was all papa’s fault.’

‘Papa’s fault !’ exclaimed Mary, opening her eyes ; ‘why, papa is altogether opposed to it.

He has never had patience with Taff Penryn, and now I have offended him beyond forgiveness, though he seeks to be good to me still;' and her heart grew full.

'It was your papa who gave you your peculiar notions, my dear,' said Mrs. Carteret, firmly; 'and who brought Mr. Penryn to the Warren, and invited him to go about with us, because Mr. Carteret insisted on recognising an obligation to the young man's father, which I confess I could never see. And it was your papa who encouraged you to go to that boarding-house, where you and Mr. Penryn, being the exceptions to the rest of the company—the only young gentleman and lady, the only English couple—were unavoidably thrown together. The result was simply natural. I cannot quarrel with what is natural, Mary; I almost believe I like you the better, my poor love, for not being unnatural. You know I never had any great regard for your women all intellect and independence, especially if they were girls. Your papa ought to have foreseen the consequences.' Mrs. Carteret was not without a little accent of triumph in her speech.

'Poor papa,' said Mary; 'must he bear the blame as well as the loss?'

'It was not your fault, or even poor Mr. Penryn's,' insisted her mother; 'and now that the evil is done, we must lay our heads to-

gether—your papa and I—and see what can be thought of for you silly, tender young people. Mr. Carteret has been able to manage to make things tolerably smooth, after all, for Lyd and Baron Sandor. Surely we can contrive and spare something to set up you and Mr. Penryn. I am glad, Mary, that your husband will have an English squire's name which has an old familiar ring, though he must redeem the credit of the Penryns; it needed redemption,' broke off Mrs. Carteret, with momentary severity.

'Then he will redeem it, if he has not done so already,' said Mary.

'I have no doubt he will,' Mrs. Carteret acquiesced the next moment, with returning cordiality, 'when he is English by the father's side at least. As to poverty, I never dreaded it for myself, and I cannot dread it for Lyd or you, but you may have yet to learn, Mary, that I shall not grudge your husband his profession, whatever it is. Chemistry, is it? or the study of mechanics?—strange to say, I have never rightly heard. I should even overlook trade—such trade as a gentleman could go into; why, we hear of dukes' sons now entering into mercantile concerns.'

It was plain not only that Mrs. Carteret's indifference to Taff Penryn was changed into lively interest by his proposal to her daughter—perhaps that was no great marvel—but her own daughter had become a far more interesting and

lovable person in the mother's eyes, by that yielding of her heart to another who was not only outside the family, but beyond the circle of eligible wooers, which had filled the father with chagrin.

Mary was very much touched. It might have been different if an absolute veto had been put on the engagement, and if Mrs. Carteret had been tempted—as she would assuredly have been—to treat Mary as she had treated the love-sick Lyd, to coddle the high-spirited, larger-minded elder sister as she had coddled the younger, and to expect the same welcoming of the coddling, the same clinging to the maternal breast, and pouring out upon her boundless sympathy of the woman's weakness and woe.

For Mary was not a woman who could have accepted mulled port wine and the liver wing of a chicken, a cushion for her languid head, and a stool for her listless feet, as the smallest compensation for a fractured heart. She would have borne her own burden, whether she had grown harder or softer under the infliction. It would only have been a worry and grievance to her to have been the object of even the best-meant attentions.

But, as it was, her mother's kindness was very sweet to her. 'How kind you are to me, mamma,' said Mary, weeping. 'What have I done to deserve it?—papa's forbearance and now your indulgence.'

‘Why, my dear, what did you expect?’ asked her mother in surprise, and even with a little accent of reproach. ‘Am I not your mother? And have I been such a bad mother that I should fail you in your need? To whom should a girl go in her troubles—claiming, with reason, such aid as the other has to give—except to her own mother?’

It was well for Mary that her father was magnanimous in his resentment, and that her mother, in the nature of the question, came round instantly to her daughter’s side, for she received no farther encouragement in her perversity from her friends.

Even Lyd, from whom Mary thought she might have expected more grace, stood aloof, and expressed only amazement and condemnation. ‘I wonder at you, Mary! If Taff Penryn had been a nobleman like Sandor, or if he had even possessed a Schloss to take you to, it might have been different,’ said Lyd, with conscious superiority. ‘But after all the fuss you heard made—if you did not help to make it yourself—about my throwing myself away; after papa’s severity to Sandor and me, which separated us for a time, half broke my heart, and nearly sent me to my grave—to think that you should go and get engaged to an odd fellow of a student, not one of the Light Blues, or a secretary in one of the Government offices, but a man who has

never been presented at Court, and who has no title to be presented, whom the Gräfin would not invite, if she had ever heard of him, to her smallest party. He is not even handsome, for he has got white hair like a child's' (Baron Sandor's hair was of a dusty brown), 'and you quite old and sensible, Polly—and after you have so long refused such a splendid match as that with the Graf—it is really too bad !'

Mary could not resist replying, 'Well, Lyd, if Taff Penryn were altogether like Baron Sandor, I do not know that I should plague my friends by having anything in particular to say to him ; happily, tastes differ.'

But Lyd's censure was mild compared to Fra's. Fra was furious, in a white heat of bitter disappointment, which fettered her nimble tongue, while she stood pale and breathless after she had been made aware of the insuperable obstacle which Mary was about to place between herself and the Graf von Felsberg, and between all chance of Fra's becoming the sister of the Gräfin von Felsberg.

Even after Fra had found voice her words were few, while they were full of such concentrated passion that Mary shrank from them. 'I will never forgive you, Mary ;' and Mary, looking at the girl's bloodless cheeks and contracted lips, was driven to believe her. 'It is perfectly shameful—I never heard of such wanton folly—wickedness I call it. I

don't know what papa and mamma can be thinking of not to forbid you ever to see or speak to them again, if you listen for a moment to a shabby adventurer—a fellow, half rogue, half fool, like Taff Penryn! I cannot help it, I do not care what anybody does, I will never forgive you.'

From that date it seemed to Mary as if Fra had ceased to be her sister, while the two lived in one house, under the same parents' roof, and were under the necessity of exchanging many unavoidable words, and combining in various common occupations. In the compulsory dwelling and acting together—under the cold, courteous bearing which girls of their nurture, however alienated, preserved to each other between themselves, as before strangers—after that single outbreak of Fra's, Mary was never able to distinguish that Frau spoke to her one word which she could have helped speaking, or that there sounded in her voice a single tone of relenting.

For a day or two the knowledge of Mary Carteret's engagement did not spread beyond the Baroness Gisela; and Mary, even in the pain which mingled largely with any happiness of that time, could not resist being amused by the little Baroness's aspect. Gisela was so unaffectedly shocked, so prompted to look upon Mary as a dangerous, lawless young woman, a subverter of society, a revolutionist, who meant to marry a man disapproved of by her father—from whom a

reluctant permission for the marriage had been simply extorted—a man who had well-nigh sunk into a lower class, since he did not think it beneath him to construct—not such models of toys as a gentleman might amuse his idle hours with—but real machinery for manufacturers, like a mechanic. In the extremity of the shock Gisela half forgot the slight which had been put on her beloved and noble cousin, the Graf, by the frowardness of his mistress, who had given him such a successor, and a triumphant successor to boot.

Mary had no formal betrothal, no publishing of her engagement for all the amazed world to read in the newspapers. She was content that it should remain as private as the most quietly kept English engagement. She was not ashamed of her choice; but she could not forget, nay, she felt bound to remember, that she and Taff Penryn were only a betrothed pair on sufferance.

It seemed a little strange to Taff Penryn's singleness of heart, and in the German rearing which had rendered much of the tone of thought and many of the customs of his father's country foreign to him. But he bore it very well; perhaps his failing entirely to comprehend it enabled him to bear it the better. There was one thing, however, that he awoke to, and which nerved him to acquiesce in a great deal that went against the grain with him. Mary was foregoing much

for his sake ; therefore he submitted to do without the congratulations of his old friends on his betrothal ; he did not complain that it was kept so far a family secret, though he had an uncomfortable German feeling that silence on the subject was disparaging to him particularly, and to Mary in a less degree.

As another consequence of English reserve, Taff Penryn had to resign the constant familiar association with his bride, which Germans regard not only as the cream of a courtship, but as profitable in rendering two human beings who propose to spend a long or short life together in the closest alliance, thoroughly acquainted beforehand with each other's tempers, tastes, and habits.

True, there was no interdict passed against Taff Penryn's visiting at the Carterets' house in the Bürgerwiese ; there could not be when it was tacitly admitted there that Mary was to marry him eventually. He went and came. The lady of the house was really kind to him—apart from entreating him to drink port wine which he abominated—and spoke to him in a friendly and confidential fashion of his marriage with Mary. He was also sensible that it was by the express permission of the master of the house that he, Taff Penryn, had the freedom of it, and he gave Mr. Carteret the credit of trying to be tolerant of him.

Nevertheless, to Taff Penryn his intercourse with Mary bristled with difficulties, and he had

hard lines as a wooer, even without taking into consideration the younger sisters' coolness and disdain. Lyd was only endeavouring to behave with the dignity which was called for in a future Baroness von Rudener. But Fra ignored him with as much superciliousness as she could venture to practise towards a guest in her father's house. The very servants, taking the cue from their betters, were disposed to treat him with scanty consideration.

He got the 'cold shoulder,' which is only not so bad as receiving a basket, from all in the house, save Mary and her mother, at this time. But he could endure it cheerfully because it was not to last for ever, and because it was for Mary, who was giving up a great deal, including that tenderest friendship with her father, for him. He was prepared to do much more for her sake. Naturally, though he trusted her fully, he had a great repugnance to the idea of their being parted for so long an interval as a year, by her going to spend twelve months in England before he should join her there. And after that grievance was disposed of, only he could tell what it was to him to abandon his mother's country, which he had served with his best blood, and of whose glorious triumphs he had enjoyed his share, as he was pledged to abandon it, in order to meet the only terms on which Mr. Carteret would consent to give Taff Penryn his daughter. Without

her father's consent Mary was too dutiful a daughter to marry him—not at least till long years and every means of patient waiting and respectful representation had been tried in vain. He did not grudge this great sacrifice made to her : he had even a sort of chivalrous pride and melancholy satisfaction in making it, since he, too, had his duty which he could not relinquish for her sake. All the more he felt bound, as she was the one love of his life, to offer her everything besides.

Gradually the news of Mary's engagement oozed out after matters had gone the length of being put in train for its accomplishment.

Mrs. Carteret would have preferred an immediate marriage, even though its prospects were precarious. She had an objection to long engagements in the abstract. She had a still stronger prejudice against such an independent step as that which Mary was about to take—a step which savoured of the old stumbling blocks of work and careers for women, such as had loomed like grim ghosts between the mother and daughter, and had been more sweepingly condemned by the former for the latter, than the poorest marriage on which a poor squire's daughter could enter.

But Mr. Carteret was of a different opinion. He approved in the end of Mary's amendment on the plan which he had compelled himself to frame, out of a sense of justice, a conviction that Mary

was qualified to decide for herself, and a lurking impression that something was due to Taff Penryn. And Mrs. Carteret was too good a wife not to defer to her husband's judgment.

Mr. Carteret was not without his faults, but the estrangement from his daughter which was rankling in his heart, and poisoning every hour of these days, could not prevent him from anxiously calculating every precaution which should guard her against the worst consequences of her folly in casting in her lot with Taff Penryn. Yet for that very reason he seemed to indemnify himself in punishing both her and himself by shutting up the whole man against her, and not leaving a loophole for their reconciliation. He remained cold, hard, and distant.

Mary, crushed by his displeasure, durst not attempt to lessen the distance between them. She saw that he suffered acutely, and she was come to that stage in her own pain that she had a little bitter comfort from his suffering. At least she had not killed his great affection outright. His heart—so much of which had been hers—had not in this short space, for the one heinous offence of loving Taff Penryn without her father's knowledge and against his judgment, become stone dead to her.

But she was ready to welcome the fact, though it dealt her an additional pang, that in the fever of the estrangement, her father was hurrying the

measures which had to be taken, that were to send her away from him and her family. He was in communication on Mary's account with his English agent. It was he who made Mrs. Carteret write to Mrs. Penfeather and get her consent to act as a chaperon and companion to Mary in her year of trial at Sandford Farm. At last he hunted up trustworthy travelling companions for his daughter. A middle-aged English scholar, whose devotion to Hebrew had kept him for the last twenty years a student at Leipsic, and his faithful wife—who had grown a German in her ways, while her husband, immersed in his Hebrew, was still as English as when he had left Oxford—were about to pay one of their occasional visits home, and were very willing to undertake the charge of Mary till Mrs. Penfeather should take her off their hands.

The time for the departure of the party was to coincide with that fixed for the celebration of Lyd's marriage. Mr. Carteret was to lose two daughters at once; Lyd was to be married and go away on a little wedding tour—a mere round-about road to the Tannenthal—the one day, and Mary was to set out for England with the Herveys the next.

Mary's proposed marriage when it was known—though it was decidedly more astounding and reprehensible in her family's estimation—did not create the same sensation in the world

without that Lyd's had created. Two such sensations could hardly be produced by the Miss Carterets' poor marriages; and the additional force which Mary's refusal of the Mad Graf might have given to her selection of Taff Penryn for a partner in life, was balanced by the fact that Lyd's alliance with Baron Sandor von Rudener had taken the gloss off Mary's engagement. As Fra said, with asperity, 'Dresden circles had got hardened to the Miss Carterets' wretched marriages; she might run off with a groom now, and nobody would stare.'

In the set which knew the Carterets best and Taff Penryn least, the circumstance that they were all English, was remembered as a sufficient explanation. One could never count on what the English would do; and the student on whom Miss Carteret was about to throw herself away, was in reality one of themselves, from their own neighbourhood, bound no doubt by old ties to the family. These English understood each other, and stuck together in their spleen and eccentricity. They professed not to speak without an introduction, yet they had their own pass-words; some of them feigned to hold trade in abhorrence, nevertheless nobles intermarried with tradespeople; there was no distinguishing between their ranks—no 'von' to serve as an index; and what could equal insular intolerance and conceit which held that the very shadow of an Englishman was entitled to homage? Mr. Carteret's youngest

daughter was marrying a German baron ; but no doubt Mr. Carteret held that this mongrel fellow Penryn's English name rendered him quite as good as Baron Sandor von Rudener, and threw a mantle over his poverty and genius—if he were a genius.

When the rumour reached the Gottessegen it had a different reception ; and though there was just a little jealousy of Taff Penryn's withdrawal from his old associates and from the Fatherland which his inventions were to have benefited and graced, with a shade of offence at the unusual silence which he had found himself constrained to preserve on the subject of his marriage, still the true comrades forgot the jealousy and condoned the offence. Mary's heart was soothed and warmed every time she encountered a *habitué* of the Gottessegen by the heartiness of his salutation and the slyness of his allusions. She had done honour to their friend, and they must pay her honour and rejoice with him and her in return—so far as she would let them.

Herr Mönch rubbed his hands, and hinted that he and she should one day enter together on a prolonged course of 'Bruss' and 'Wallalice.'

Fräulein Körner was still more explicit. 'Human nature is a better thing than I thought ; the great Graf has been beaten in a contest for a girl's hand by a poor scholar. Oh, I am proud, proud ! and the English are to be glorified.'

Kunigunde Jacobi came to fulfil an engage

ment in Dresden, looking as bright, practical, and busy as ever, and fairly put it to Mary—‘ You are going to be as happy as I am, Miss Carteret, by marrying “ Er Kann Alles,” a poor fellow like my man, who has never done so well with his journal writing as this last year, and nobody says that I have fallen off in my parts any more than Emmerich has made a miss in his. Yes, we still play together, and it is so convenient for Minnie and Robert that they have not to be running off from us to pay visits to each other ; we are like one family, and one wedding anniversary, like one Christmas, serves for both. *Ja wohl!* I am so happy that “ Er Kann Alles ” is the man. What a treasure he will be in a household ! He can put up with any fare, and his genius is at his fingers’ ends. He is a soldier as well as a genius, and his genius is the true gold which is the current coin of every-day life, and is not kept only for state occasions—you must allow me the pleasure of telling you so.’

In anticipation of Lyd’s wedding breakfast, a vexation, which had haunted and harassed Mary’s troubled mind all the time, grew, as it struck her, into painfully grotesque prominence. How would the Graf behave at his cousin’s marriage, after he had come to know of Mary’s engagement and of her immediate departure for England ? As yet his absence in visiting his various estates, at her random suggestion, had kept him in blessed

ignorance of the end of his hopes and of his fantastical wooing.

Not only was the Graf to be present, so was Taff Penryn. Lyd, who had softened considerably to Mary during the last week, had presumed on the importance of her position as a bride, boldly to propose, in the hearing of her father, Taff Penryn for one of the marriage guests. When Mr. Carteret said nothing, while he sat in one of the brown or 'black studies,' as Fra called them, into which he fell frequently, Lyd wrote the invitation with her own hands. 'There, I have done it, in spite of Fra, papa, and everybody,' she whispered, in excited exultation, to her eldest sister; 'your future husband is not to be left out, Mary; and, do you know, dear, I hope, as Sandor is so good—though, of course, he takes his cousin's part, marvels, and is indignant like the rest of us—but that is all past and done with—and I do hope you will yet be welcome at Schloss Rudener,' finished Lyd, as if Schloss Rudener were Windsor Castle at the very least.

Taff had no thought on his part but of being present, though he anticipated little enjoyment from the scene. This was not one of the free, happy German marriages like Kunigunde and Emmerich Grün's, celebrated amidst crowds of relations with almost riotous rejoicings. But it seemed to him that it would be using Mary ill, and picking a quarrel with her relations, which he

had no desire to do, if he consulted his pride and absented himself. It would take the broadest hint which Mary could give to keep him away.

After all, the Graf was amenable to law and custom like the rest of the men of his generation. Mary's first foolish idea that he would prosecute his courtship after the fashion of the rough love passages between William the Conqueror and Matilda of Flanders had proved false.

Taff Penryn was surely English and rational enough, in spite of his share of Teutonic blood and his Teutonic nurture, to decline a duel, supposing the Graf had not had enough of duelling, and did not think Taff Penryn beneath the honour of his challenge.

There would be enough witnesses to the meeting to keep the peace between the men, however belligerently inclined. There could be no outrageous outbreak to mar the harmony of Lyd's wedding.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

THE WEDDING BREAKFAST.

LYD had craved that everything should be German in the great ceremony of her life ; she would have adopted Poltern Abend and the feast in a hotel with all the pleasure in the world. But she had been overruled here ; Mrs. Carteret was mistress of the ceremonies, and so Lyd's was to be a quiet English wedding with its rejoicings condensed into a decorous wedding breakfast. The Gräfin von Hersfeld was to grace it. Of course, there were to be Madame Marck, Gisela, and a few more distant relations and friends of the Rudeners. These were to be matched by some members of the English families in Dresden best known to the Carterets, and by the young English clergyman and his sisters who had come on a visit to him.

‘It will be very stiff and dull,’ said Lyd, shrugging her shoulders ; ‘I am glad that we shall be gone after the first toasts. As they are to be in English, while many of the company only understand English, Sandor is thankful that we

shall only have to return *Wir danken schön* in German. A nice speech, such as he makes to the Tannenthal foresters, would be wasted. But, Mary and Fra, do see that all the old slippers are flung after us, and that we are sufficiently pelted with rice—of course, I cannot attend to it—in order to show what English merriment we have at our marriages to my new country people—they will be mine as soon as I am Baroness Sandor. Does it not sound delightfully grand and pretty? so different from plain Mrs. Carteret, like mamma, or Mrs. Penryn, like you, poor Mary!’

Luckily for the *éclat* of the day—and Lyd in her happiness cared a good deal for the *éclat*—Lyd’s wedding-day occurred, to her great satisfaction, on the King’s birthday. It goes without saying that his Majesty took no part in the manifestations connected with the wedding of one of his faithful subjects. He had too much to do with his own engagements—the serenade from his regimental band in the morning, the reception of congratulatory visits from the Princes of Saxe this or Saxe that, the grand review of the troops on the neighbouring exercise-ground, which drew a concourse of private carriages, droschkies, and pedestrians across the Alte Brücke; and the family dinner at half-past five.

But Lyd had the advantage, in her eyes, of awakening betimes on the bleak spring morning, which was so momentous to her, to the sound of

the military music of a section of the Saxon army, which marched in detachments hither and thither, with redoubled precision and vigour throughout the day, and to the sight of flags, green and white, dark green, blue and yellow, red and white, waving in every loyal direction.

‘It is as if it were all for us—Sandor and me,’ cried Lyd, ecstatically; ‘and the illuminations to-night will be in our honour also, not on this day only, but for every year which brings it round. Oh, how jolly! and how I wish the King may live for ever.’

Mary saw the company assemble with quakings of heart; but, to her agreeable surprise, the Graf stalked in among the first, resplendent in the magnificent diamond studs belonging to his evening dress, looking perfectly complacent, and actually jesting with the bridegroom. He carried a bouquet of myrtle and white roses far superior to that of the bride, and he walked straight across to Mary, and presented it to her meaningly, with an expression of unmingled satisfaction in his blue eyes.

‘How well he is behaving! better than most sane men would have conducted themselves on a similar occasion; he is showing not a particle of malice. Is he going to heap coals of fire on my head?’ Mary said to herself, in admiring surprise, not unmingled with compunction for her old estimate of the Graf.

Then a horrible suspicion shot across her mind—was it possible that he had not been told? that everybody—Baron Sandor, Gisela—had shrunk, to the last moment, from enlightening him? Had they made the grand mistake of sparing the Graf a few hours longer, only to make the blow, which must fall on him the next day, all the heavier?

If so she was bound to take the task upon herself; it was due from her to him—she owed him that. Sometimes lately, in the softening of her heart from mingled joy and sorrow, she had thought somehow of Fra's song, the 'Lady of the Lea'—though Mary had never been conscious of being a Lady Disdain—and believed that she owed still more to the Graf—a gentle apology for her hardness and impatience, a tolerant hearing of his wrathful remonstrances, and an earnest recommendation to him to think no more of her, but to see at last that she was entirely unfitted for him.

By the time the ceremony was concluded, Mary had worked herself up to such a pitch of heroism that she let herself fall a victim, not reluctantly but willingly, to the Graf's impetuosity, which succeeded in upsetting one of the arrangements for the company at the breakfast-table. She was so engrossed that she neglected to respond to a single one of the many amazed indignant signs made by Taff Penryn, to whom it was a gross breach, at once of propriety and right feeling, that

a betrothed pair should sit separated at a family festival.

Lyd had Fra and Gisela, with some other English and German girls, for her retinue of bridesmaids. At her suggestion and that of Fra, Baron Sandor had requested his cousin, the Graf von Felsberg, to do him the honour of acting as groomsman. The Graf had complied, but he was ignorant of his duties; not only was he unprepared with the toast of the bridesmaids, he would not perceive the obligation to escort one of them to the table. He broke through all the established regulations, strode to Mary's side, and held out his hand to her, as if that were the proper arrangement, with the haughty determination that admitted of no contradiction.

It was a difficult position for more than Mary and Taff Penryn—for Gisela, who knew her cousin to be misled with regard to what so nearly concerned him—for Fra, who, with a less distinguished partner, swept by Mary in her priority as first bridesmaid, casting on her sister, while she passed, a withering glance.

Mary did not notice it, any more than Taff Penryn's knitted brow; she was gathering all her forces for the encounter. As soon as she was seated at the table, she began a rapid low conversation in faltering German, under the cover of the chatter and confusion of tongues around her.

'Are you aware, Herr Graf, that I start for

England to-morrow morning?' She was sensible she was speaking abruptly, that he did not know, and that he could not take in the whole meaning of the step in a moment; but if the communication was not easy to make, any attempt at preparation would only complicate its difficulty, and so would be useless, as it seemed to Mary.

'So!' he exclaimed, in simple astonishment and a little dismay. 'This is a new idea, is it not? Do Mr. and Mrs. Carteret and the whole household go too?'

'No,' said Mary, 'nobody except me.'

'And when do you return?' he asked quickly.

'Not at all,' she answered; 'at least, not if papa and mamma come over for a few weeks next year, as I hope they will; in any case, if I do come back it will only be for a visit.'

The Graf was utterly bewildered, and he was not good at a puzzle. 'Why, why?' he questioned, with his old bluntness and brevity, though he was now speaking his native tongue; and then he anticipated her explanation.

'I go to England also,' he said, doggedly.

'Oh no!' exclaimed Mary, emphatically; and then she felt that her contradiction called for an awkward explanation. 'I do not know that England would please you much, Herr Graf; and, pardon me, have you not more to do at home than to go roaming aimlessly about the world, like any landless man without duties to his fellow-

creatures? Did you find everything as you could have wished at Felsberg and your other places when you were there lately? Papa used not to like quitting the Warren—our little place, at all; and he said he never went away without discovering everything wrong on his return,' she said, with a nervous laugh.

Of course, she did not expect to get off in this way. She was convinced that the Graf was the very last man in the world to have the wisdom to take a polite hint, swallow his disappointment, and so be spared further mortification.

'If you depart for England to-morrow, my gracious young lady, I depart for the same country the next day.' The Graf spoke his mind plainly.

'No,' again said Mary, more firmly and calmly, if a little sadly, this time; 'your movements can bear no relation to mine, Herr Graf. I am going to England to marry and settle there, while your place is in Germany; so that I trust your future wife, who will preside with the best grace at Felsberg and make your castle home-like for you, may also be a German.'

There was a decided pause; a hot flush had risen on the Graf's brick-red cheeks; he flung back his yellow hair; a sparkle that might be dangerous was in his eye as he looked at her and played with his knife, making no pretence at eating. He was questioning her face as keenly as

his somewhat obtuse intellect could accomplish the performance. Was she making game of and befooling him? Was this a cruel ruse to get rid of him?

Mary answered his glance, looking fairly in his face, and making up her mind on the moment to tell him all, and to throw herself on what generosity might lurk behind his folly. 'Yes, I am telling you the simple truth; and, do you know, you are the first to whom I have mentioned it out of my family. I am not like the girls who can go about making happy confidences. My family are not pleased with my marriage, though papa has consented to it and mamma takes pity on me. Can you understand, Herr Graf, what it is for a woman to go away and prepare for her marriage in such circumstances? If so, I think you will not add to the troubles, which overshadow my happiness.'

He sat still, gazing fixedly and gloomily at her.

'Why should you?' he asked again, in a deep voice.

'Ah, do not ask me,' she interrupted him quickly; 'I cannot help myself. If I care enough for a man to give up all the world for him—as indeed a woman should care for the man she marries—as Lyd cares for Baron Sandor there—and straightway is content to bury herself in the rusticity of the Tannenthal and the poverty of

Schloss Rudener—if I care so much for a man who is in every respect different from you, Herr Graf, still, is that any disparagement to you? May I not fulfil my destiny and be happy in my own way, as I sincerely hope that you will be happy in yours?’

He made a gesture implying a dismissal of happiness, but otherwise he continued quiet. ‘In every way different from me,’ he repeated, with a protest that was really guileless in the incredulity of its pique and resentment.

‘Yes,’ she said; ‘now see how I trust you. There is the man whom I am going to marry,’ indicating Taff Penryn, sitting rather forlornly farther down, on the other side of the table, and causing the Graf to start violently. ‘Is he not another man from you? and being so, and the man whom I have chosen, could I have ever chosen you, as your wife should choose you, out of a thousand? And is it either your fault or mine that it is so?’

He had received such a shock as absolutely to stupefy him. He stared blankly at Taff Penryn—no longer out at elbows, but still sufficiently insignificant in the eyes of the great German nobleman.

Then the Graf reviewed his own claims—those of the descendant of the Felsbergs, the Thuns, and the Fuggers. Slow as he was, there passed in a few seconds before his eyes, as in the

shifting scenes of a panorama, pictures of Felsberg and its noble historical remains, Buchwald and its splendours, the Sophienlust with its dainty charms. He recalled the flattering notice which he had received from every rank of society wherever he had gone, the immunity he had enjoyed from ordinary checks and censures, the degree to which his fancies and whims had been tolerated and pampered.

He looked again, almost stolidly, at the flaxen-haired student, of not the slightest consequence in the world, of no renown, save, indeed, that he had a reputation as an incorrigible dreamer, and had succeeded in some paltry mechanical invention, the sound of which had reached as far as the Graf—for the latter, like many men of his class and character, was a receiver of gossip in his high and mighty way—but which he had regarded with something like careless contempt.

In the Graf's estimation Taff Penryn's talent of story-telling, which had been exhibited in the far back excursion to Saxon Switzerland, was more to the purpose than his inventive genius. But would any young woman, especially any young woman of rank, in her senses, granted that they were English senses, dismiss such a suitor as the Graf von Felsberg, and offend all her friends, as she had just owned to him, in order to give herself to an adventurer, who was as a wandering minstrel of old would have been to a mighty prince? It

was all very well to encourage such a gift for the entertainment of the fellow's betters. The Graf had even welcomed its reflection in Mary while looking on her in the light of his companion for life. But to allow it to weigh down the scale in the comparison instituted between the two men was altogether unheard of.

Now the Graf, in marrying Mary, would not have been deliberately resigning, in her favour, a princess in her own right. He would not even have been marrying far beneath his station; and he should have raised her and conferred on her his rank instead of forfeiting a long list of honours and pleasures for her sake. The two acts could not be mentioned in the same breath. Was this the English oddity of which he had heard and been warned? Had there been a glamour thrown over the woman whom he had regarded as only too wise and witty in her youth and comeliness, and who, after the humiliating confession which she had of her own accord made to him, sat there still, as if she were the mistress of the situation, tall, fair, in the white dress which became the occasion, with the drooping acacia blossom in her brown hair? She was perfectly self-controlled, and retained all her wits about her; he had the evidence thrust upon him, in the tumult of his senses, by the grace with which she was still playing her part and remaining alive to what was passing at the table around her.

The Graf's brain was reeling, the more so that he had been hit hard under his panoply of vanity and conceit. What had been in the beginning a mere extravagant fancy, stimulated by opposition, had become strengthened and confirmed by wilful indulgence and by a constancy which, except in his relations to his kindred the Rudeners, the Graf had never enjoyed an opportunity of developing in any former passage of his life, until it had grown a respectable passion. Its final denial did not so much inspire him with blind fury as cause a despairing collapse of his powers, with a numbing, aching pain entirely foreign to his experience, which seized on each nerve, and dulled it by the very tightness of its grasp and by its startling deepseatedness.

The Graf had come in contact with the real and he found himself in a moment stripped of his old refuges of blustering assumption. At the same time those Robber Knights and Roberts les Diables whom he had hankered after as ideals must have held some grains of true chivalry in their rude and stagey composition. He forbore further defiance or threatening. He continued to sit half sullen, half sheepish, by Mary's side. The sudden silence which had fallen on the conversation was unremarked amidst the common excitement and small sensations which were in turn occupying the table, in the proposing of the toasts, the cutting of the bride's cake, the finding of the

ring, and at last the departure of Baron and Baroness Sandor.

No, the Graf was not clean destitute of a gentleman's courtesy and a man's magnanimity. Just before the close of the entertainment he afforded a glimpse of that better nature and of the lingering generosity and kindness of heart on which Gisela had been wont to set store. He stooped forward and addressed to Mary some hurried sentences just as she got up from the table—thankful for release from purgatory, to bid good-bye to Lyd in private. Acting on an impulse, he spoke in English, which was barely intelligible, stammered through the teeth he had been grinding according to all established formula—‘Miss Carteret, you can do as it will please you; I go not now to England. It is not for me to add to the troubles of a woman's.’ The last sentence was not spoken without dignity, in spite of its extremely defective grammar.

‘I knew you would not, Herr Graf,’ said Mary, softly; and she felt that she had laid that ghost and taken a long farewell of her persecutor.

Lyd broke down at the last moment, naturally. She clung to her mother's neck, sobbed on her father's breast, kissed and returned to kiss again Mary and Fra. She was taken off by Baron Sandor, forgetting all about the old shoes and the rice, only thrice happy in the fact that her bridegroom was perfectly able to dry her tears, and

that the new home was destined to take more than the place of the old in her heart.

No wonder Lyd had broken down, when Fra actually burst out crying for a moment, and in the same breath threw back at Mary a bitter reproach for the unexpected tears of which Fra was intensely ashamed. 'I may well cry. She believed in me, and cared for what I thought and said—once, at least. Lyd and I used to be happy together, as we might still have been if she had not come across that dolt of a baron. I have lost my sister!'

'Fra,' said Mary, imploringly, prompted to a last appeal, 'you have another sister. Let us be friends—better friends than we have ever yet been, though I am going away to-morrow.'

'You, Mary!' exclaimed Fra, scornfully, and turning sharply upon the suppliant with unshaken hostility; 'what can I have to do with you? You are far above or below me in your idiotic disregard of worldly considerations and your miserably foolish love affair for a woman of your age. You always stood apart in your pretended superiority—not that I cared, or condescended to defer to your elder sister's dignity or to papa's ill-judged favouritism. You had never any faith in me. You sought to make mischief between Lyd and me, and you did it at last. You had one chance of making it all up and atoning for everything, and you threw it away

that you might disgrace yourself and the rest of us. No ; papa and mamma may do what they like ; they are criminally weak, but I can never forgive you.'

Mary had a single moment of explanation with Taff Penryn to compensate her before the guests left. At least he was reasonable, considerate, tender in his fidelity ; she was safe in trusting her life to him.

Then Mary sat in the reaction of stillness—almost of sadness, into which the house fell when the festival and its occasion were over, and in the completeness of her own preparations. She looked half vacantly, half wistfully, at one of the little triangular pyramids of lamps which represented an illumination, and which, in accordance with German economy, was not suffered to burn throughout the night, but was carefully extinguished at an early hour, with the extra supply of gas reserved for a future occasion.

Mrs. Carteret came up and joined Mary in her solitary watch, full of the new sympathy which had sprung up between them.

Mrs. Carteret had her own trials to bear. It was hard upon her to part from two daughters at once, even though Lyd had departed with her bridegroom, and a marriage was also to form Mary's goal ; but the mother had her consolations. 'I will certainly do what I can to come to England with your father next year, dear, though

I could wish there had been no special occasion for the visit. I would rather have run what risk there is, and had you married at once, along with Lyd to-day. I know Mr. Penryn would have greatly preferred it. But it was your own proposal, and I can appreciate your being anxious to ensure your father against loss from his arrangement, though I must say I consider that was rather Mr. Penryn's affair than yours, my love. However, your father approved of your scruple, and it was too late to have got your trousseau ready in time. Then you will have Mrs. Penfeather with you—and I have perfect reliance on my old friend. Our former neighbours, also, are not far off, and they will take notice of Mr. Penryn on his father's account, and get him made a member of the Hunt, I dare say, because Taff Penryn was one of us, and though he spent his money he never did anything actually to forfeit his position. I am afraid people will think it strange that you two should be your father's tenants; still such arrangements have been made before, and I confess I am glad anything so feasible has been hit upon. I wish I were with you to contrive to make the public rooms at Sandford look as well as possible; we could have spared so many things from the Warren when it was one of you girls who wanted them for your own house. You must take care, above all things, not to do anything odd, to which I fear you have a little tendency,

my dear child. And although I would by no means recommend a great deal of visiting, still you ought to be prepared at once to take your modest place in your own old set, and to receive and give due hospitality. Let me see whether it is the Scudamores or the Dennisons who are nearest Sandford?’

‘Dear mother,’ said Mary, ‘talk to me of yourself and what you will do; you may not miss me much; but both Lyd and I must make a blank—and—and, papa will have you, mamma.’

‘Yes, dearest,’ said Mrs. Carteret, briskly, and with so bright a smile irradiating her little fine-featured face that it glorified its incipient puckers and crows’ toes and made it look young again: ‘I must lay myself out, now that I have a little more leisure, and that he has no one besides me, to being papa’s companion again. I must do what I can to withdraw him from his study and get him to walk out with me regularly. Fra has her own engagements, so there will only be the old people left to each other. I remember he began to teach me chess soon after we were married, and he said I did not make a bad pupil. There were endless interruptions in those days, and we had of necessity to give up the game; but I think we may resume these evening lessons. Oh yes, we shall do famously, as Regy and Tom, dear fellows, used to say; so don’t fret about papa,

Mary. Apropos of the boys, I have a delightful scheme in my head of which I talked to your papa last night, and he did not say a word against it. Don't you wonder what it is? When Fra is married also, we two—papa and I—shall take trips across the Atlantic and the Pacific. I would not mind a bit; you know that you all declared I had a genius for travelling; and I could look after your papa's comforts while we should pay visits to the lads.'

'I am afraid if these were to take place you would never come back; we should never see your face again, mamma.'

'How can you think so? As if I should not long for my daughters' faces also. Though, if it came to that, you would have your husbands and households; you would not want me, as the boys must until they get wives, and I hope they will not think of marrying and settling—Regy especially—until he come back to the Warren. But as for a woman, she has everything when she has her husband and her home.'

'Has she?' asked Mary, doubtfully, feeling that she had not everything in her promised husband, though he was a man in a thousand and her own choice. Her heart was very sore and was racked with conflicting emotions.

'Papa,' she said, when the last moment had come, and she had entered his study in her travelling dress, 'Oh, papa, don't send me away from

you without one word'—and she ventured to put her hand on his arm and hold him back.

'What would you have me to say, Mary?' he asked her in a half-choked voice; 'I cannot approve, but I have not blamed you, have I, child? You have the right to dispose of yourself. There, God bless you;' and he pressed her in his arms, and got his hat and went with her to the railway station.

Taff Penryn was there, too, of course, for the last word and the last look; and it was still in the strife of contending claims that Mary saw, through a haze of burning, unshed tears, the receding figures—standing a little apart from each other as if in sign of their life-long opposition—of the two people who were dearest to her on earth.

CHAPTER XLIX.

SANDFORD AND MRS. PENFEATHER AGAIN.—SOME-
BODY TO WHOM TO SAY ‘SOLITUDE IS SWEET.’

MARY was back at Sandford. She was like a lark that had alighted among the corn, had returned to an old nest, and was setting about converting it into a new one.

Mrs. Penfeather, with her outward quiet and her inward unexhausted energy, her past stirring experiences, and the dead calm of her present existence, in which she had perfect leisure to enter into the concerns and live the lives of her friends, was by Mary’s side, and proved an available friend.

And there was Kit Must, still rugged and rustic, admiringly respectful to his mother and intolerant of all other women, even of Mary, whom he found, to his disgust, imposed upon him for his permanent mistress.

Mrs. Must was also in her old quarters as the decayed upper-servant, the victim of an unfortunate marriage, full of cast-off airs and graces, and of the coolest selfishness. She was always man-

aging to impress on the simple people around her, and almost to persuade Mary and Mrs. Penfeather, that they were all putting upon her—Mrs. Must, and laying themselves under a debt of obligation to her for condescending to remain in the establishment, and to overlook the small staff of servants; whereas Mrs. Must had never been so well off in her life as she was now, when she made a young cook's and housemaid's lives a burden to them by her exactions and murmurs. She was, in fact, a nuisance that could not long have been tolerated except for Kit, who regarded his mother as an irresponsible sovereign to whom he owed unstinted allegiance, and who would not be separated from her.

These were old elements with which Mary was only renewing her familiarity; and yet they felt strange to her, and that not merely because she had been some time abroad, enough of vital importance had happened to her there to make England itself, English speech, English ways in which 'men are rude and speak their minds,' with English habits of emulation, self-indulgence, and waste—extending through all ranks, in a measure foreign to her. The mere fact that a revolution had occurred in her own life, that she was at Sandford with an entirely different intention from any which she could have conceived herself as entertaining there, made a new world for her of the island of the farm-house and its offices, in

the spreading sea of corn—a delicate braird when Mary came first, but soon shooting and sprouting apace—in process of becoming ‘white to harvest.’

Mrs. Penfeather was not so much astonished as Mary had expected by the news of her engagement. ‘I am too old, my dear, to be much astonished by anything, now,’ Mrs. Penfeather said. ‘Perhaps I do not look so old—not older than your mother—but some of us live so many lives besides our own, and begin living them so early, that we are Methuselahs long before we are fifty. I saw you were struck with the young Anglo-German. I wondered sometimes whether you would cross each other’s paths, as you were not ill-matched in faith and enthusiasm, though he was too much in the clouds of his dreams and of his Teutonic prepossessions to wake up to you that day; he was guilty of over-looking you at first, but I suppose he did more than atone for his short-sightedness the next time. Did I ever think you would leave your father? I hardly doubted it. Why, Mary, it is the most devoted daughters and sisters who are prone to commit matrimony. After all, it is but a transference of allegiance. When we were here together last, don’t you remember you were wild to help your father? and now it is your lover and husband you will aid, and you are happy in being permitted to do something for him. No, I do not think that you have been unfaithful to your father; at least,

it has only been in nature's sweet instinctive infidelity which has truth to God's laws at its root. To resist and outrage them would have been a greater error, involving a heavier penalty to all concerned—including your father, than the suffering incurred by any sudden wrench, however severe.'

But no wisdom of human experience on Mrs. Penfeather's part could prevent Mary from viewing it as something extraordinary that she should be staying at Sandford, and paving the way for its becoming the future home of herself and Taff Penryn.

Mary's position was not free from difficulty. And it was still full of regret and pining, for she could not make the exchange—which in her case had taken place under untoward circumstances, between the love to her father and the love to Taff Penryn, which was thenceforth to take the pre-eminence in her heart, without revolts and revulsions, and an anguish of yearning.

The self-reproach did not proceed from weakness of character, but from the reaction of strong affection; for Mary was much more a woman of cordial and tender affection than of violent passion. Such strong affections when they are dragged different ways must needs have a back current and an underside. Mary had hardly doubted, since Taff Penryn claimed her, that it was her duty to acknowledge his claim, but her con-

sequent alienation from her father had preyed upon her mind, and pierced her with sorrow and contrition, which was like shame, as if she were indeed an undutiful, ungrateful daughter. Sometimes it required all her honesty to herself, all her reasonableness to resist the crushing conviction.

Unquestionably Mary's great consolation lay in the thought of Taff Penryn, for whom she had done this thing and was undergoing this exile. It ceased to be exile when she remembered to what it tended—Sandford would be home, a fresh home in old England, when he was there in his proper place as its master. With that goal before her she could bear the wearing contest of the opposing influences in her own heart, she could read her father's not unfriendly but cold, constrained, and short letters, and she found that it was better—even than receiving Taff's very different letters, crammed to overflowing not only with his hopes and wishes, but with his schemes and aspirations—to calculate how well she and Kit Must's accounts had come out as yet, to consider what changes might be necessary in the house, and to try to look at it as it should appear a year thence.

Already it was a very different Sandford in her eyes to what it had been when she had come there for a few days with her father, although she had always indulged in an idle fancy for the bare farmhouse with the corn growing up to the door.

At that time she would no more have dreamt of putting Sandford before the Warren than she would have seriously preferred an ox-eye daisy to a rose; now she would actually have selected the farm-house in preference to her former home as a residence for herself and Taff Penryn. She was glad there never had been any thought of their occupying the old mansion till the family's return.

Mary saw that the very simplicity and emptiness of Sandford would render it more suitable for Taff Penryn, and would positively recommend it to him. She had a consciousness that he would have had difficulty in breathing and finding elbow-room amidst the accumulated relics of generations at the Warren. The mementoes of the past would have been nothing save an oppression to him.

She pleased herself with thinking that the great gaunt-looking, echoing sitting-rooms at Sandford, though they had none of the cheap brightness of a German *salon*, had still its space and freedom, dearer than aught else to a man nurtured to look upon them as chief boons. He would judge that here he might lead a life nearer his unfettered, uncramped standard than he could have hoped to live at the Warren or in any other house, probably, with which he had been familiar in England.

She even planned for the accommodation in one of the public rooms of Taff's workshop of models and innocent results in chemicals, where he might work

his turning-lathe and contrive his combinations. The other room must be half a conservatory, for, like all Germans, he had been brought up to have his flower garden inside his house, and would take care not to spoil it. It would be a different room then—a dear, busy, wonderful room, with picturesque in its contrasts, its marvels, its very homeliness. Many people might not be able to appreciate the difference, but the greater loss would be theirs.

The Carterets' old neighbours and friends were taken by surprise when Mary Carteret re-appeared at Sandford Farm, under the wing of Mrs. Penfeather.

They were only partially acquainted with the *raison d'être*, but they guessed more than they knew; and curiosity combined with other motives to render them desirous of showing their old friends' daughter and their former associate every attention.

Mary's heart warmed towards those ancient allies, but she was shy of their overtures for renewing the old intercourse. She seemed to see better than her mother did, and much more clearly than many a squire or squire's son—reduced to be a gentleman-farmer—apprehends his changed position, that she could not at once keep and cut her cake.

If she and Taff Penryn, backed by Kit Must, were to manage the farm to profit, they could not

at the same time mingle on terms of equality with the families of the landlords of those farmers, into whom the *ci-devant* squire's son and daughter were proposing to transform themselves. The latter could not enter into the former's pursuits, and join in their doings, without serious expenditure on the amateur farmers' part, and a still graver waste of that time and energy which constituted their capital. In place of lord-lieutenants' balls and coming-of-age dinners, the Penryns, when they were one, must confine themselves to harvest feasts, and to killing and eating their own mutton. Their thoughts must be of the rearing of calves and the lightness or heaviness of proof wheat and barley, and no longer of the forming and training of a stud, or the size of a pine-apple.

Mary had been aware, before she crossed the rubicon, that a certain amount of self-control and self-denial would be absolutely necessary in order to give her undertaking a chance of prospering, and she was bravely bent on practising the qualities.

Besides, the old neighbours who were inclined at present to take Mary Carteret's adoption of rustic surroundings as an amusing novelty, and to put up with it and patronise her, would in course of time tire of the strain of condescending to her lower estate, and would gradually drop it and her. She felt she had much better make up her mind to ordain that the distance which must be established sooner or later should be put in force from the first.

Neither were these the most forcible reasons for Mary's declining the civil advances of her old set. She was quick to distinguish that its members would hardly have an idea in common with Taff Penryn. It was a very little matter that his father had been one of themselves, since the son had passed entirely beyond their orbit. Mary could not help smiling when she recalled her mother's notion of getting him asked to become a member of the Turfshire Hunt.

Taff Penryn seeking his recreation—not to say finding his best occupation—in joining a crowd of competitors, donning a pink coat, lifting a horse to a stiff fence, and riding down a fox!

Well, even he might readily admit the gain in manly courage, endurance, and presence of mind—qualified though it were by a suspicion of cruelty, which was to be won in the approved sport, since he had been bred a German soldier, and taught to put the full price on manly qualities.

But Mary thought of the wanderings, knapsack on back, in forests and among mountains, making ever new discoveries in natural history, and fresh acquaintance with primitive people—of the taking a spell at smith's work in a forge, or at potter's work in a pottery, which he called recreation; she recollected his words on the Bastei, when he declared that every second of that time which the Graf felt desirous of killing, was unspeakably precious to the aim of his life. How

would the squires round the Warren regard such an aim? If her father had held Taff Penryn a monomaniac, would not they, when his theories—or, rather, visions—dawned on their horrified and outraged imaginations, avoid and cut him as a stark, staring lunatic, who ought to be put under fitting restraint to prevent him blowing up the house at Sandford and setting fire to every stack in the yard?

On his part, he would judge the squires as infinitely inferior to the homely, sage, and erudite frequenters of the Gottessegen. He would consider they had a horizon scarcely more extensive than that of the grafs and barons whom he and his comrades had been accustomed to pity, even while they had treated them as a privileged class.

It was evident to any intelligent onlooker that Taff Penryn and Mary must live so far for themselves and each other, while they led an isolated life on their dubious footing at Sandford.

Mrs. Penfeather, who disapproved on principle of isolation and abnormal conditions, was often exercised in spirit in contemplating the case beforehand. She took to comparing it to one she had read of in a popular biography of her youth, when Fanny Burney, having extorted an unwilling consent from her disappointed father, set up domestic felicity with her emigrant General D'Arblay in rooms in a farmhouse. Fanny had

left a royal court behind her, but she had always her dreams of literary ambition to console her. So had Taff Penryn his dreams, which were still more castles in the air than the *Châteaux en Espagne* of a storyteller; still Taff Penryn was not the woman in the difficulty. At this advanced stage of civilisation, Mrs. Penfeather could not in any circumstances hug herself on a paradise which was to be confined to one Adam and Eve. 'It will not be a healthy position for either of them, and I have always considered that the Germans, among whom he has been brought up, are, in their different classes, an eminently social race. They say that great wits are "to madness near allied"; God grant that the solitude which he has never known may not render him more visionary—dispose him to moping—make him the madman that the world is so ready to call its undeveloped great men. But why should I forecast evil? Poor Mary has enough trouble on her shoulders without looking out for more, and how can matters be arranged otherwise?'

In support of Mary's decision, it was fortunate that she and Mrs. Penfeather had no very near neighbours except the Honeywoods at their cottage in the village, and that the great proportion of the Warren circle were considerably removed from Sandford.

It did not require Mary's patent excuse that she and Mrs. Penfeather had no carriage at their

command. Her neighbours' carriages, or rather carriage-horses, were subject to all the ills that horseflesh is heir to, and to the elaborate precautions of coachmen as spoilt and lazy as the animals. Soon Mary saw, to her relief, the renewed intercourse on which her mother had dwelt with such lively congratulation, on which even Mr. Carteret had counted, and that had been recommenced with zest on the one side, dwindle into an occasional call from a conscientious dowager, or a five minutes' invasion by a thoughtless riding-party.

There was an exception to the seclusion. Mrs. Penfeather made much of that exception, because, as she said in her sagacious human instincts, it is very sorry company which is not better than none ; and Mary soon grew reconciled to the single invasion.

The Honeywoods were both too near and too irrepressible, so far as Alice was concerned, to be waved off like the others.

Alice was only a new acquaintance, but she had all the energy which a personal motive imparts to most human beings to enable her to carry her point. That point was to hang on to the skirts of Mary Carteret, and by her means to get beyond the vicar—as great an absentee in Yorkshire as ever—and the doctor, with their households, the limit of the society, which Alice had complained of to Mary on first introducing herself at Sandford.

It did not signify how quietly and plainly Miss Carteret lived at Sandford. It mattered little what might be the reason of her residence there. And on this question Alice was not more accurately informed than her neighbours. It might be a failure in health which Mary was seeking to remedy and at the same time to keep secret, lest it should spoil her matrimonial prospects—that was entirely Alice's idea. It might be increased necessity for economy. It might be a poor marriage impending, to bear out a rumour floating in the air. Be that as it might, under any and every light Mary was still Miss Carteret of the Warren, originally Alice Honeywood's social superior, and to this day probably capable, with proper management, of lending Alice the aid of Mary Carteret's county prestige to lift the aspirant a step or two higher on the ladder up which so many pushing feet and grasping hands are struggling, as if it were Jacob's ladder with its top reaching to Heaven.

Alice was ready, as before, to overwhelm Mary with her interest in the school to which Fra and Lyd, not Mary, had belonged. The interest was not lessened when Alice heard, with cautiously expressed admiration, that one of the girls whom she so eagerly claimed as schoolfellows had merged into a baroness.

'To think of little Lyd Carteret—forgive me, Miss Carteret, but we were all Lyds, Alices, and Fras at the dear old school' ('If you were,' Mary

made a mental note, 'Fra and Lyd must have been very much mistaken')—'to think of dear Lyd being a baroness! Well, some day, perhaps, when we go abroad—as the Czar always promises me we shall—I'll come upon her Schloss—is it *ein Schloss am Rhein*? I always think of every Schloss as on the Rhine, though my geography has made me acquainted with other German rivers—and then I shall pay her my first visit.'

Mary could not refuse to say that Lyd would be glad to see her old schoolfellow. Indeed, Baron Sandor's bride was so infatuated that she was not likely, in spite of her own experience, to imagine that she might be sweeping sundry cobweb illusions from her old companion's eyes when Lyd displayed to her visitor her poor Schloss and her rustic Baron.

Alice's walking in and taking possession of the occupants of Sandford would have been a proceeding far more distasteful and destitute of pleasant attributes had she been wholly selfish in her assault. But she was an essentially social being, under the restraints which her ambition imposed upon her. She was friendly in an easy way, and brimming over with superficial agreeability. It was not all, or nearly all, an imposition. She was very glad of neighbours whom she was at liberty, according to her code, to cultivate at Sandford, although they should do nothing to draw her and her brother further into the ranks of the upper classes, even

although, in the ruling fear of her life, the strangers were not without an element of danger to Alice.

The Czar was yet more attractive, just as he was, while a fairly clever business man, a great deal more unsophisticated. His lack of assumption and his virtue of frankness lent him a sterling tone. There was no vulgarity about such lingering homeliness as Alice had sedulously divested herself of. It had its raciness, as his briskness had its unconquerable cheerfulness, though he was not succeeding in his management of the chemical works. Do as he would, he could not make them pay—their sole end in his and their proprietors' eyes. The owners were naturally not contented with the result. They were constantly threatening, after one or two further trials, to stop the works. But the men in authority did not connect the unproductiveness of their speculation with any lack of skill or inattention to their interests on the part of the manager; he had so much comfort in the midst of his failure. Still, if he could not obtain greater returns within twelve months, he must be thrown out of a situation, though he might not be deprived of a character. The jaunty little establishment, kept up cleverly on a moderate income, and in which he as well as Alice had taken pride, was very near being broken up.

The unsatisfactory state of affairs was quite well known in the neighbourhood. Alice put the

best face on it, in her woman's fashion ; never hinting at it abroad, and being brought with reluctance to whisper the discussion of the chances at home. But he would allude to his precarious position with a straightforwardness which had no levity in it, and was nevertheless full of dauntlessness.

His mingled sincerity and courage recommended him to his friends, above all to the women who had become his neighbours at Sandford. They prized them the more on account of the friendliness which was always at their service and was not so much the courtesy bred of polish as the good will which is the living soul of all true courtesy. Mary and Mrs. Penfeather put an extra value, because of Mr. Honeywood's undeserved adversity, on the good spirits which might otherwise have struck them as apt to be boisterous. They reckoned up in his favour the musical gifts, the cultivation of which was so great a resource, and such a marked feature of life at the cottage. Above all, the two women were touched and won by the strong alliance and attachment which subsisted between the brother and sister.

Thus it came that very soon Alice Honeywood had her way ; she and the Czar were on familiar terms—the only family, far or near, who were on familiar terms, Alice said to herself, half in pride, half in chagrin, with that other family at Sandford.

Not only was Mrs. Penfeather gracious to Alice's vivacious chit-chat and ready superficial interest

in her neighbours' joys and sorrows, but Mary looked favourably, though it might be a little languidly on the visitor who was sure to make a considerate appearance when she was wanted to consult on some local question, or to break the monotony of a rainy afternoon. Mary was conceited enough to enjoy astonishing Alice with the squire's daughter's practical knowledge of farming accounts and farming details. Who knew but that it might do Alice a little good in the end, by elevating the tone of her gentility and making her ashamed of being useless instead of useful?

Alice had yielded her views gracefully to the extent of giving up the late dinners, which she had insisted on maintaining as a *sine quâ non* in the Honeywood pretensions, though the Czar had protested against their inconvenience. Mary did not know that Alice still called her early dinner luncheon to all except Mary herself. In consequence of these early dinners, the leisure time which the families occasionally spent together were inaugurated in both houses by the 'serious teas' which had their place in the meals of the day at the farm. The evenings at the cottage were no longer the sequels to little pompous rather than piquant dinners on which Alice spent all the savings of her housekeeping and two or three days in contriving. Neither were they mere musical evenings supposed to occur after a late dinner of many courses, and in which a strawberry cream was the light and airy refreshment.

CHAPTER L.

ALICE HONEYWOOD'S FEAR.—TAFF PENRYN'S
ARRIVAL BEFORE HE IS WANTED.

ALICE HONEYWOOD had attained her end, and, like most people in similar circumstances, she found not only that it was not quite the end she had anticipated ; she soon began to suspect, in addition, it held a risk for which she had not exactly bargained.

It has been already hinted that Alice's life was overshadowed by a great fear which she could sometimes keep in the distance, and then she was comparatively at rest, and able to enjoy the Czar's protection and affection, the exercise of his and her talents, her youth and buoyancy, and her own little social manœuvres. At other seasons the dread loomed large and near, and darkened and embittered her whole existence—the more so that it took its rise in the source of her proudest and sweetest satisfaction.

Alice was wholly dependent on her brother ; she owed to him not only her present comfort and her happiness in the life which the two led

together, but her immunity from what was in her eyes social degradation. If her brother had not kept her, Alice must have worked for herself; of course as a governess, the least compromising calling an ordinary woman can follow, and one which, as being the refuge of many helpless, decayed gentlewomen, is even invested with a considerable amount of rather lackadaisical sentiment.

But at its best, Alice, who had been behind the scenes, was sensible that to be a governess was a great downfall from being an independent—no, an idle—young lady, and one who had the advantage over other idle young ladies in being at the same time the responsible, capable head of a nice little establishment, and the centre of her own small circle of satellites and dependents.

In spite of that slightly maudlin sentiment which hangs about poor ladies forced to become governesses, and which Alice, were she tried, would do her very best to preserve—though she were to see herself compelled to bridle her excellent inheritance of buoyant spirits and feign a more interesting melancholy—the world was too cool and calculating to treat those governesses who claimed its pity with the consideration which is bestowed on less stranded and lachrymose individuals.

Alice was painfully conscious that her prospect of securing a woman's sole promotion of matrimony (Mrs. Carteret was not more convinced that it was the sole promotion possible under the

circumstances) would incur a fatal shipwreck if she ceased to be her brother's housekeeper, and were turned out on the world to add another unit to the already alarming proportion of 'over and above' women struggling to earn for their despised individualities a scanty subsistence.

Alice shrank unconquerably from such a fate. With all her natural gaiety of heart, even with her quick parts, the girl had her share of apathy and indolence, and was a lover of ease and pleasure; so that—as a climax to her false but widely spread estimate of what is most deserving of honour in woman—self-denial and sustained effort were, from her moral constitution alone, obnoxious to her.

Poor Alice regarded it as a hard and terrible obligation that so much should depend, where she was concerned, simply on her brother's having or not having the feelings of his kind, and on his yielding to or resisting them.

It would be to express the situation more clearly to say that Alice's fate hung on her being able to watch so vigilantly, and to plan and execute so dexterously, that the Czar should be constantly prevented, without his knowledge—for men have a silly sensitiveness about being their own masters—from taking the compromising step which should part the brother and sister.

Alice, in her worldly shrewdness, had no doubt of what the Czar in his man's short-sightedness might have questioned, that his marriage would send her out into the world to shift for her-

self, since he was not a rich enough man to form a separate establishment for her and allow her a pension. No woman whom the Czar might marry would agree to divide the sovereignty to which she had attained, with the ex-sovereign. Alice knew what she herself would do under similar circumstances, and if any woman were found so weak and soft, Alice did not think that she could stoop to remain and receive the half as a grace, where she had once possessed the whole as a right.

She had not the smallest doubt of her present right. It was one of the first duties binding on unmarried brothers to support their unmarried sisters who had no other provision made for them. Alice stretched the duty a little further, and held that it was incumbent on such brothers to remain unmarried to the last, if the sisters were not able to improve their opportunities of securing for themselves fresh homes at the expense of other men.

If she did not put the arrangement in these very words, that was precisely her meaning.

With this impression—which, to do her justice, was not peculiar to her, and is not uncommon among portionless women owning unmarried brothers—Alice felt no scruple in sharing the Czar's income. She had a certain idea that she gave as well as got, for were there not but two of them, and did she not serve the Czar as housekeeper? In that sense she incurred the odium of working for her bread. At the same time, to serve one's

brother is the next thing to serving one's husband ; it is not generally paid with money wages, and is therefore, or for some more occult reason, determined by the judges of society to be not so deteriorating as ministering to a stranger.

However, since tolerable housekeepers who are not tempted to look upon their situations as permanent, are to be had for moderate salaries, Alice, who was clever enough to see through a millstone, did not privately attach much credit to her own assertion. Yet she was apt to utter it loudly when it suited her purpose.

On other occasions she would air what at first sound might strike a listener as a statement the very opposite of the first ; she would say she had nothing of her own ; all her trifling authority was wielded, and all her careful expenditure was made, on the Czar's account. Thus was it to be expected of her that she should contribute separately to this or that local charity ? And, at the same time, could she be altogether blamed for dressing as nicely as anybody in the neighbourhood—as the wife of the vicar, who was a land-owner on her own account, or the nieces of the doctor, daughters of a rich solicitor in London, who came down every summer to visit their relations and make a dash in the country ? It was with the Czar's money, for his credit, and to please him that she dressed well. It would be a reflection on him if he were made to appear to grudge her clothes, and he was always pleased,

dear fellow, that she should look nice. She did manage—and this was the truth—on an allowance which would not serve some girls for bouquets and perfumes.

Neither was Alice wounded in her conscience or her affections by the knowledge that she was standing in her brother's way, monopolising his hearth, and robbing him of a man's first privilege in choosing a mate.

She kept house cleverly for the Czar, hunting after bargains wherever she could do it without losing caste. She coaxed the old servant whom she got to take all the heavy work of cooking and housekeeping, not so much because it was heavy, as because it was not ladylike in Alice's eyes. She trained the young and ornamental maid into a showily neat—not smart (such a distinction may be made), house and table maid in one. Alice did not mind that the girl was little of a help—rather a hindrance and worry to her elder coadjutor—that she was flippant and careless, and threatened to become a sorry member of society, if only she could do her spiriting with some deftness, and if she were as unlike as possible to a wretched drudge of a maid of all work. This was Alice's *bête noir*, not from sympathy with the hardships of the drudge, but from a rooted belief that such a homely appendage was, like five o'clock teas instead of six o'clock dinners, a sure, if compulsory, indication that the family

which retained her, could not by any effort be classed as belonging to a civilised class of society. Alice liked her housemaid to be always fit to be seen; that is, always clad in the lightest and freshest of calico gowns, with the most coquettishly demure of little caps—a badge of servitude which Emma might be the more reconciled to inasmuch as it was anxiously constructed by her mistress's own skilful hands—so much importance did Alice attach to the livery of a housemaid being faultlessly correct. And, as Alice considered, the result of her efforts was eminently satisfactory, for Emma impressed upon the household the conventional stamp of refinement.

The Czar, who was really little of a Muscovite, and still less of a Turk, was made comfortable by the old cook, and pleased (he was not without his own vanity) with what Alice taught him to believe was good style and good taste, and the general prettiness of everything—to the extent of submitting to a few inconveniences. He thought nobody could manage like Alice, and that management was an excellent thing in a woman.

Again Alice was even sedulously attentive to her brother's crotchets when they did not interfere with her own fancies. She flattered and petted him—as he had an agreeable illusion that women ought to flatter and pet the men with whom they have to do—and probably her genuine affection rendered the deliberate flattery all the

more subtle and beguiling. She was always gay, always ready to gossip with him, or to sing with him. He regarded himself as very well off, and since he was an affectionate fellow, he frequently praised and complimented his sister.

Alice was quite of his mind; her brother was very well off, though he should not marry these hundred years or ever. Who could care for his worldly goods or humour his slightest inclination as she did—as indeed it was her interest to do? And if only a man's highest life consisted in his feeling comfortable and well satisfied with himself, and in his being fooled to the top of his bent, Alice and her brother were right.

At first Alice's fear had slumbered where Mary was concerned. But some little accident, some trifling expression of admiration from the Czar, some unusual alacrity and satisfaction testified by Mary in consenting to be the audience to those old English duets of 'I know a bank,' 'The Canadian Boat Song,' 'Drink to me only with thine eyes,' etc. etc., which the brother and sister sang so well together, awoke into full action what was always there—if dormant, always crouching in jealous suspicion, prepared to spring up, engage in the struggle, and fight to the last against defeat.

Alice was naturally a rational woman, cool and clear-headed as far as her head went; but a woman who is haunted by a perpetual nightmare

is in constant peril of losing her head, and when the fit is on her she will give implicit credit to the wildest absurdities.

So Alice no sooner began to apprehend that the Czar might arrive at having designs on Mary Carteret, than she pushed the alarming idea a great deal further, and fancied that Mary entertained designs on him.

It was not, in Alice's mind, so extravagant a conception as it might seem. The Czar was a rising young man, though he could not make what he wished of the chemical works under his care, and he was gradually pushing his way into higher circles. On the contrary, the Carterets of the Warren were falling down in the world, and the sons of the family were in a far worse position in America and Australia than the Czar was at home. Only to be sure it made a world of difference when it was in Canada or at Queensland, and not in an English shire, that a young man laboured on his own land or served as a stockman.

Alice was quite of the mind that stratagems are allowable in love and war. Like the Spartans in the matter of theft, she did not hold that designs on each other were forbidden to men and women, if only the designs were conducted with gentlemanlike and ladylike delicacy and tact, and if, above all, they proved successful.

Mary Carteret had been gracious and friendly to the Czar when he called for her and asked her

to convey a communication to her father before the family went abroad. What bold person was prepared to say authoritatively he had not made a favourable impression on Mary at that distant date? If so, when she found that her foreign campaign was likely to be fruitless, and since there was no time to lose—for Alice, like Fra and Lyd, was disposed to look on Mary in her twenty-sixth year as a little *passée*, and tending to the sere and yellow leaf of maiden charms—was it not credible that the image of the Czar had recurred to her, and she had made up her mind promptly to come home and establish herself at Sandford with Mrs. Penfeather, while she laid close siege to the prize?

When this extraordinary figment had been not only conceived, but put into feasible shape by Alice's inventive brain, she had no more peace. But she did not proceed to hostilities in any open and direct fashion; for, although Alice was not notably insincere, it did not belong to the order of her genius, or to the kind of her difficulties, to take frank and straightforward steps.

Besides, Alice, like Mary, was drawn two ways. Alice continued to pique herself on the familiar footing which she had established between Sandford Farm and the Cottage. She had not lost hope of substantial results in the way of introductions to Sir Richard Dennison's and to Colonel Scudamore's families being achieved by this means. And in

her accommodating temper she rather liked Mary, though there was really little in common between the young women, beyond their being young women and belonging to classes which approached each other.

It would not do to cast aside tangible advantages because of uncertain dangers, even if this throwing away did not give the lie direct to the shabby proverb, that 'honesty is the best policy,' and turn out the most suicidal course which Alice could have adopted.

No, Alice's conduct was based on totally different tactics. She was more attentive than ever to Mary; she never once interfered, either by deep scheme or bold stroke, to curtail the frequent opportunities for the Czar and Mary meeting. But she lay in wait, in the midst of her lightest chatter and most hospitable or most affectionate demonstration, for every word or look of the couple which, like a straw, might show her the direction in which the wind blew.

Every time the Czar appeared from any encounter with Mary in which Alice had not happened to have a share, though she did not put a single question to him, but was cunningly careful not to suggest the association which she was guarding against, her eyes roved over him in covert glances, to detect in eye or lip, in the flower in his coat, the book in his hand, whether there was a dawning change in him, whether he

had made one forward movement which it would be her next business to outflank.

In like manner Alice did not avoid the mention of Mary's name, and she never fairly attacked her friend behind her back, which would have been not only childish and foolish, but too barefaced, after she had begun the promising acquaintance by praising Mary Carteret enthusiastically, and extolling and encoring everything she did. Alice only turned so far as to slide in a qualification with each encomium. This she delivered in the manner of a cooler and more impartial judgment, while it was as damaging as faint praise generally is, and had something of the wearing effect that the continual dropping of water has on stone.

Yes, Mary Carteret was fine-looking, but it was a pity that she would get coarse as she grew older; good looks in such a large florid style invariably became either hard or blowsy.

In spite of her pride there was something very attractive about Mary Carteret. (Mary was Mary Carteret with Alice from the beginning—indeed, Alice was rather fond of distinguishing her better-born associates by their Christian names behind their backs, whether her degree of acquaintance with them warranted the familiarity or not—it was a lingering trace of the lower breeding which poor Alice had striven so indefatigably to get rid of.) At the same time Mary really did not know how

to keep her place ; she simply allowed that horrid Kit Must and his mother to be impertinent in different ways by their rudeness and their encroachments.

Mary Carteret got on wonderfully at the farm, though she was penny wise and pound foolish, like so many gentlefolks who have such curiously incongruous notions of saving and wasting. Mary would not have two dinners at different hours—the servants' dinner at one o'clock and her own dinner at six o'clock—as she had been accustomed to have them all her life, because she considered it unsuitable in a farmhouse, and a waste of time, which was capital, still more than of materials. But the dear soul never thought that a servant's dinner could, with a little pains, be made up, three days in four, out of the scraps of the master's and mistress's dinner, and so in that manner the late dinner for the heads of the house was in fact the more economical plan of the two.

Alice's brain was racked to produce these dulling shades and injurious touches. The sleeplessness of unresting vigilance wore her out, as well as worried her ; she was even dimly conscious, with some bitterness in the recognition, that she was guilty of falseness and meanness in her proceedings. But what then ? they were her only means of preserving her position ; and, unhappily, they were not strange to her ; she had dealt with them before ; she must deal with them

again many times unless she married before the Czar could sink into the safe sluggish slough of old bachelorhood.

The Czar was not long a stranger to Alice's trouble. He was soon, from old experience, perfectly aware of the intent watch which she kept on him and Mary Carteret, and of her indefatigable and generally successful endeavours to be a third party in their meetings. He read as in a book the motive of each one of Alice's invidious remarks. Not being a young man of very fine feelings, though he was a good fellow enough, he was immensely tickled and just a little touched.

Poor dear Alice! she meant to keep him as long as she could, which was only natural. But that was not a bad idea of Alice's: he wondered if she had any grounds for her sisterly jealousy? Women were all jealous, poor souls, he had it on the best authority, but they got the credit of being also tolerably sharp-sighted, particularly where their own interests were concerned. Miss Carteret was a very fine girl, what he called a regular stunner. If she would condescend to him the connection might not be amiss. The proprietors of the works would think twice of closing them, supposing—but it was only an idle fancy—that he became the squire's son-in-law. Miss Carteret was likely to make a capital thing of the farm, with so good a bailiff as Kit Must. He would have preferred, indeed, to have had the place al-

together in his own hands, and that his wife—but it was not come to that yet, by a long chalk, only a fellow might contemplate a possibility, in fact, if he were up to anything, he was bound to do so—well, he would rather have had his wife confine her talents to her domestic concerns, ‘like Alice did.’ These were quite enough to fill any woman’s hands, if she and the man to whom she was united were to get all the good out of life, and make as fair a show as he was persuaded he and Alice made with their housekeeping. But he need not stand out on such an objection; women like Miss Carteret naturally demanded as much power as they could get, particularly when they stooped a little in marriage.

Mrs. Penfeather had once said that Alice Honeywood would twist her brother round her fingers; but there is such an accident as the twisting operating in the backward way. With all Alice’s reasonableness, caution, and speciousness, she was doing her utmost to bring about the very misfortune which she was bending her whole energies to avert.

In the meantime Mary Carteret was walking in utter unconsciousness of such a complication, which had barely crossed Mrs. Penfeather’s mind, when, to make confusion worse confounded, Taff Penryn appeared unexpectedly on the scene.

It was on an afternoon approaching harvest time, when the ‘rippling wheat’ was growing

russet about Sandford, that Mary, standing at the window, saw a shadow cross the sunlit field-path. It was the shadow of a young man whose suit of grey was dusty and travel-soiled, who wore a slightly peculiar little cap, and who was carrying his own knapsack strapped on his shoulders. The last time Mary had heard of that man he had been in a valley of the Rhone, looking after his interest in a silk-weaver's firm; and he had not given the most distant hint of any likelihood of his coming to England for the next eight months—not, indeed, till Mary, or somebody for her, summoned him. But she forgot all about expediency or a summons when she gave a low cry of joy and ran out into the hall to open the door herself; and when Mrs. Penfeather hurried out of the way, saying to herself, ‘The conquering hero in his own person. How fond she is of him! How happy she will be to-night! But what brings him here now? He is arriving too soon: I am afraid of disaster.’

Mary was in Elysium for an hour, and then she suddenly bethought herself on various points. Was it loyal to her father that Taff Penryn should be there? Mr. Carteret had certainly taken it for granted that the lover would remain away in Germany or elsewhere till Mary had completed her trial year; though it was equally clear Taff Penryn had not understood such an arrangement, and did not see the least impropriety in his premature arrival.

It sounded inhospitable, less than kind, and not at all loverlike to enquire why he had come and when he was going away. But Mary, as she was true to the trust put in her, must ask these questions, blushing and laughing to hide her embarrassment.

Fortunately he was not a man to take offence easily, especially from the woman he loved dearly, and on whose faith and devotion to himself he placed, and had good cause to place, the utmost reliance; still even he parried her enquiry by a counter-question, jesting as it was. ‘Am I not wanted? Would you rather that I had stayed away? I am come, Liebchen, because I could not stay away any longer; and I mean to remain as long as you will have me.’

He did not see the smallest objection to his staying, and Mary felt a little perturbed and rueful in the middle of her gladness.

‘Had you nothing to detain you in France?’ she suggested almost timidly, in spite of her perfect assurance of his confidence in her. ‘Are you satisfied with what the manufacturers there are doing with your invention—for your interest in it?’

He laughed lightly. “*Der Kohl schmeckt sehr gut, sagte die Magd, und ass das Fleisch,*” he quoted. ‘What do you think, Mary? they sought to bind me not to prosecute the invention to its lawful consequences, if I were not to secure it for their benefit! They wished to take out a monopoly

in me as well as in my bobbin, and I was already ashamed of my share in the monopoly of the bobbin. Why, in the name of Heaven, if it be any boon to weaving at large, should I let myself be bullied into limiting it to the workmen of one firm? I have dissolved the contract.'

Mary's heart sank unmistakably, a fathom's depth, out of all proportion to the value of the little competence thus flung away. His inventions would resolve themselves into moonshine, her father had said. This was not exactly the kind of moonshine which Mr. Carteret had meant, but, without doubt, her father would catch at the present magnificent folly in support of his words.

Taff Penryn saw that she was disappointed, and it vexed him a little in his delight at being with her again, while he wondered that she could mind such a trifle at this time.

But he was also eager to compensate her for her disappointment. 'Never mind the bobbin,' he said cheerfully, and with a glow rising in his brown cheek; 'I have been thinking out something else lately, and I am very near crying Eureka! It is not the great Arcanum; alas, no! but it is something worth ten thousand bobbins. The world will make a noise about it—and the world may, for this will contribute to alter the destiny of nations.'

Mary listened to him devoutly, and yet her heart grew sick.

CHAPTER LI.

BEGGARS SHOULD NOT BE CHOOSERS.

BEFORE Taff Penryn had been an hour in the house, Alice Honeywood was shown in, stared, recovered herself adroitly, and greeted the stranger as an old acquaintance, the German Mr. Penryn who had come to see the chemical works, and whom her brother had brought to the cottage two years before. Then she volunteered the announcement that she would only stay five minutes, until she could explain to Mrs. Penfeather the knitting pattern which she had brought for her—and so set herself to make her observations. They did not call for any profound exercise of penetration on Alice's part. Taff Penryn had no more comprehension of any deep obligation to concealment in his relations with Mary, than he had a sense that his presence at Sandford was undesirable until he should come to take possession as master. Mary writhed under the scrutiny of those sharp eyes of Alice Honeywood's, which Mary was aware were hardly more reverent, though they were a great deal more friendly, than Fra's, and which held an ample store of mockery in their good humour.

But Mary could not effectually restrain Taff Penryn. She could not convert his innocence into hypocrisy within the next quarter of an hour. She could not prevent him from addressing her as 'Mary,' and showing transparently his special interest in her doings and surroundings. Indeed, she had a comically provoked realisation that he held himself to be on very good behaviour, and quite humouring her English reserve, because he did not draw his chair to her elbow or take her hand and hold it publicly.

Alice's conclusions were alike speedy and complete. She was filled with a curious mixture of relief and scorn as she eyed Taff Penryn's dusty travelling suit and the simple luggage—with regard to which she conjectured that he had been his own porter—and then thought of the Czar, who, without any sisterly partiality, looked so much more a man of mettle and substance than this flaxen-headed crotchety student, though he were a hundred times descended from an old county family like Mary Carteret's own.

Alice certainly did not admire her friend's selection of a future husband, yet withal there was a little spice of mortification on her own account. To think that Mary Carteret in her indifference—real or assumed, was so well supplied with wooers (if only Alice had got an inkling of the Mad Graf!), while she, Alice Honeywood, who wanted a husband about as badly as any girl, had at this

moment absolutely nobody in view who might fill that onerous situation.

But Alice was prepared to play her good-natured, obliging part, which was well calculated to bring her into the centre of whatever life was going on around her, to afford her occupation and amusement, and sometimes to lead the various threads of the web of life conveniently within reach of her hand.

‘Is there any difficulty in lodging Mr. Penryn?’ asked Alice frankly. ‘I know your temporary accommodation is not extensive,’ she said to Mary and Mrs. Penfeather, with ready consideration; ‘can he sleep over at the cottage as he did before? I need not say that our spare rooms are at his and your disposal. The Czar and I will be only too happy if he or any of your friends will appropriate them whenever you may want them.’

‘Thank you very much,’ interposed Taff Penryn, with rather doubtful gratitude in his looks, in spite of the hasty fervour of his words, ‘but there is no occasion. I can sleep anywhere, on the floor, in the barn. You remember my quarters in the town of Rudener, in the Tannenthal? and you know, Mary, that no place comes amiss to an old soldier.’

‘You are not in camp now,’ said Mary; and then Mrs. Penfeather came to her aid and confirmed her in the reluctant conviction that the best thing they could do would be to accept Alice Honeywood’s friendly proposal. If the fact of their

accepting it tended to shorten Taff Penryn's visit, which, to Mary's confusion and dismay, he seemed prepared to protract to an indefinite period, it might also be the gentlest mode of suggesting to him that such a visit was not practicable in the stern light of what the English Mrs. Grundy would say under the circumstances.

Yet Mary felt it was a disagreeable necessity—all the more disagreeable that the person concerned did not at all see the obligation—which thus compelled her to turn over Taff Penryn, for any part of his time, to the hospitality of comparative strangers.

While Alice Honeywood was taking her leave, and cheerfully repeating her assurances of how pleased she and her brother would be to have Mr. Penryn, and to find themselves of any use, and how she would manage so that Mr. Penryn might come as late to the cottage and go as early to the farm as he chose—Mary not only guessed that Taff Penryn was grumbling discontentedly in his heart—she saw that he was looking at her with amazed, dumb reproach in his eyes, which was a thousand times worse than any amount of grumbling. Last of all, she had a distressing consciousness that she was, as it were, sending Taff Penryn among thieves when she consigned him to the tender mercies of the Honeywoods. It was not that she did not depend upon their good faith, in refraining from laying themselves out for spreading the news

of the visitor to as much as they could reach of the neighbourhood; but she had a keen consciousness that no two types of human beings could be more unlike and more incapable of appreciating each other than Taff Penryn, in his single-heartedness, abstractness, and ideality, and the Honeywoods, in their frank self-seeking, bald common sense and smart cleverness. She remembered, and winced as she remembered, the Czar's old contemptuous dismissal of her lover as an outrageous enthusiast. She had the remorseful consciousness of having betrayed Taff Penryn to be disparaged and ridiculed.

It did not console Mary that, after Alice Honeywood was gone, Taff Penryn neither sought an explanation of the arrangement which had been entered into on his behalf, nor made a remark upon it—farther than, in reply to an effort of Mrs. Penfeather to get him to perceive its advisability, he said, a little drily, that it was no matter, he would go when and where they liked, even though they saw fit to send him off the first thing, before he had got time to look around him at what was to be his and Mary's future home. The protest was a momentary spurt; he was himself again the next moment. But Mary knew his pride had received a little shock, and that his satisfaction at their reunion had been impaired 'the first thing,' as he had said.

'If he had only written to announce his

coming,' Mary told herself with a sigh, wrung from her by the misfortune, and still more by the knowledge that Taff Penryn could have come to her amiss or too soon. She was tempted to wonder, cynically, if those pleasant surprises of their friends which sanguine, loving people are perpetually perpetrating often answer their purpose, but do not, on the contrary, prove mostly fertile in compunction to somebody concerned? Yet, if she had been quite honest with herself, Mary would have admitted that she must have found considerable difficulty in answering such a letter as she regretted that Taff Penryn had not written.

Alice Honeywood hastened home, inspired by a genuine love of gossip, and with some concern for her brother's frame of mind when he should hear the tidings. But she began to flatter herself that she had been, as had happened in other cases before now, nervous and fanciful without her host, in supposing that the Czar was being caught by Mary Carteret, particularly since it was proved to the utmost point of presumptive evidence that Mary had not been free to be caught by him or any man. After all, if it were not well for Alice's brother to marry, the sooner an insurmountable obstacle presented itself to any special inducement to wedlock the better for him and for everybody.

Alice was so impatient to give her information

that, when she found her brother was not in their flowery, spruce cottage, she walked down to the works and intercepted him on his way home. ‘Goodness gracious, Pat,’ she cried, in an old form of expletive of which Miss Bradshaw and Ivy Lodge had not altogether cured Alice, and taking his arm as she spoke, ‘what do you think has happened? The lover that some people have said was the cause of Mary Carteret’s becoming her father’s tenant, has turned up at Sandford. I saw him there this very afternoon. And who should he be but that odd young Mr. Penryn, whom Mr. Carteret sent over to you to be taken through the works ages ago?’

‘Nonsense, Alice,’ said the Czar with sufficient discomposure, but discomposure of the nettled rather than the wounded description. ‘The fellow was as mad as a hatter, and had not a penny to bless himself with. He let out as much to me without my pumping him. Do you think Mr. Carteret would ever allow, or Miss Carteret be tempted——nonsense, nonsense! I thought you were a little wiser than to lay yourself out to find mares’ nests.’

‘Go up to Sandford for yourself, dear, if you don’t believe me,’ said Alice, holding on by his arm, and with too much consideration for his feelings to be offended. ‘There he is, just arrived, but already established like one of the family. “Mary” every word, as I never heard a man

address a girl in company before their marriage was declared, and not even then unless the *trousseau* were ready and the banns to be published in a week or so. By the way, Pat, he is coming over to us to sleep. I could do no less than invite him.'

'You had very little to do,' said the Czar, still with much more tartness than he was in the habit of displaying with regard to any proceeding of his sister's; but he was not quite so fond of company as she was, and he was struggling under some annoyance. 'He may be an old friend of the Carterets. I am aware his father was one of the county folks before he made away with his property. There may have been a boy and girl attachment between him and Miss Carteret, but what call is there for us to encourage such an undesirable flame? Very likely he is a nuisance to her and Mrs. Penfeather.'

'In that case, don't you see it is kind of us to take him off their hands?' said Alice, turning the tables on him; 'for there he is, and there, if I am not much mistaken, he has a good right to be. Do you think Mary Carteret would submit to any old playfellow, "bearded like the Pard"—whoever the Pard may have been—coming and calling her "Mary" before visitors, after he had quartered himself at Sandford?—for, I can tell you, he did not intend to go elsewhere. If you please, it was Mary and Mrs. Penfeather who took me at my

first word, which I could not, in common politeness, avoid saying.'

The Czar, who had been accustomed to accept his cue in politeness from his sister, deferred with a grudge to what she asserted the *bienséances* had compelled; but he stood doggedly to his incredulity as to Miss Carteret's having made so foolish an engagement, until incredulity should cease to be in his power.

Alice felt bound to overcome her brother's obstinacy. She was, as she told herself, determined to be at the bottom of the affair, for her brother's sake as well as her own. She had no opportunity that night, when Taff Penryn, after supping at the farm, only came to the cottage in time to exchange a few civil words with its owners before going to his room. But next morning Alice got up early and dressed herself in her prettiest morning gown, embellished with much frilling and embroidery, the work of her own industrious hands, and which it rejoiced her heart to have an opportunity of displaying, even to Taff Penryn. She tripped down, like an attentive hostess, and intercepted him in the hall as he was about to go out, exchanged cordial greetings with him, and suggested that, if he had not taken the precaution of ascertaining the previous night the breakfast hour at the farm, he had better have a cup of coffee before he started. She had just poured out one for her brother, who was already off to the works.

Taff Penryn hesitated in the *terre inconnue* in which he found himself, and then complied with her request.

Miss Honeywood was kind and agreeable. She chatted with him freely on a variety of topics while she presided at the breakfast table, and expressed herself as exceedingly gratified by his saying, in answer to her courteous enquiries, that he approved of the cottage coffee. 'We always think our old Anne Sole makes good coffee, but then we are no judges like you who have lived in Germany. O, Mr. Penryn, is that one of the German signet rings on your finger?'

'No,' said Taff Penryn, smiling, drawing off the ring in question, and holding it out readily between his finger and thumb, 'don't you see it is quite plain, like your marriage rings?'

'But you are not a married man, are you?' asked Alice with an innocent laugh as she examined the ring.

'The next thing to it. I am a bridegroom,' he answered, with another happy-sounding laugh. 'I thought you might have known as much,' he added, after an instant's pause, with a shade of surprise and doubt stealing into his voice.

'Well, I have seen a ring very similar to yours on the hand of a dear friend of mine,' acknowledged Alice ingenuously.

'If you had been in Germany, and not in England, you would have done more than see the

rings : you would have heard all about our being bride and bridegroom,' he said.

'Oh then, Mr. Penryn, may I congratulate you and Miss Carteret?' she asked eagerly.

'All right,' he answered lightly. 'I'll take her your congratulations, if you like.'

Thus, the Czar had no more room for doubt, but was reduced to being saturnine and disgusted with the folly of mankind and of womankind in particular.

Withal there soon began for Mary the tortures of love that is true love, yet inexperienced in its truth, and which exists between those who are not entirely of one mind and are placed in awkward and unpropitious circumstances.

If Taff Penryn and Mary had been left to themselves, the forbearance, the tenderness towards each other's failings, and the faith in a worth above those failings—component parts of all love which is true and lasting—must have come into practice ; but the two were not left to themselves. There were complications produced by Taff Penryn's partial residence with the Honeywoods and by his blundering simplicity. Alice Honeywood's inclination to be in the centre of whatever was happening around her, had its effect. The Czar's feelings not being sufficiently engaged to prevent his rather liking to confront his successful rival and to show up his deficiencies, was not without its influence.

One result of all was that the two families were thrown together more than ever. Instead of Taff Penryn's having an instalment of his domestic bliss with Mary, and being at the same time at liberty to subside into those studies and investigations which were the very breath of his nostrils, and if deprived of which for any length of time he was thrown out of his element, he found himself drawn perforce into a small social circle, indefatigable in its visiting in proportion to its smallness, and to its consisting almost wholly of youthful members.

Alice Honeywood insisted on her brother's entertaining Taff Penryn at dinner—she would have it a dinner on this occasion—of course with Mary and Mrs. Penfeather to meet him; and Taff Penryn, whose voice was all for friendly suppers, garden coffee-parties, students' 'beers,' impromptu resorts to the theatre or to the concert-room, was ungrateful enough to regard the dinner as a piece of vanity and waste—a ceremonious bore.

Mary and Mrs. Penfeather, knowing the Honeywoods' tastes, and feeling indebted to them—in this matter of housing Taff Penryn among others, did not see how they could avoid giving a 'little return party.' And somehow, under the ingenious auspices of Alice Honeywood, the two dinners were multiplied and spread into luncheons, musical gatherings, little pic-nics, and early teas,

until the four young people were seldom apart. As Alice said—with an undercurrent of sarcasm to other ears of which the speaker was herself unconscious—‘Mr. Penryn’s coming had made them all delightfully gay.’

Since Mary and Taff Penryn were thus largely cheated of their *tête-à-tête*, the next hope for them was that they might have had the support of a judicious friend like Mrs. Penfeather, who could have done for them what they could not do for themselves—enlightened them mutually as to mistakes tolerably sure to occur, warded off from them impending dangers, and steered them triumphantly through their difficulties.

But, as misfortunes never come singly, the pair were deprived of this aid. Mrs. Penfeather was liable to aguish attacks—the lingering consequences of the shocks and hardships she had experienced in some passages of her life. These attacks were not immediately dangerous, but they were utterly disabling for the week or the days during which they lasted. When Mrs. Penfeather was seized with one on this occasion, she could not, with the best will in the world, ‘take care of her lovers,’ as she called her interesting duty, at this time. How could she, when she was shivering and burning alternately, as she lay on her bed? Instead, she was obliged to close her eyes tightly to shut out—now the spectacle of her Hugh, the husband of her youth, battling

for that terrible half-hour in a vain strife with the waves which overwhelmed him at last—now, the sight of her brother receiving the sabre-cut in his back from his own jemadar. She had to go over and over again with distracting repetition the circumstances of her midnight walk from her own compost to the most distant bungalow in the camp, which was in smouldering flames of revolt all around her. In the meantime, Mary and Taff Penryn were inevitably left to their fate by Mrs. Penfeather.

CHAPTER LII.

CAN TWO WALK TOGETHER UNLESS THEY BE AGREED ?

It seemed as if the atmosphere of his father's country acted prejudicially alike on Taff Penryn's body and mind. The very shape of his coat and the cut of his beard looked out of place in England. He smoked to a more objectionable extent than he had ever done in Germany, just because he was conscious that he was no longer in a land of smokers. Thus, although, at first, he strove to accommodate himself to the habits of the country, as he had done when he came to the Warren, and to break himself into comparative abstinence, with a view to the future, the forced deprivation only rendered him restless and drew him back with redoubled violence to the refuge of students. He had a smoky, shabby, unpractical air in England, which Mary was forced to see, and hated herself for seeing.

There was no doubt that English life was distasteful to him, and he could not conceal his distaste. His association with the Honeywoods rubbed him the wrong way, and brought out

every peculiarity, every weakness in the man, into exaggerated relief. In place of being able to subdue his theories to suit his audience, the theories waxed rampant. There appeared to be nothing too incredible for him to argue upon, as if he believed it. The disintegration of air and water with the crash and combustion of the elements therefrom, or a passage to the moon, proved trifles to his excited, fertile brain. Mary would not have been surprised by his undertaking to demonstrate that the moon was made of green cheese after all.

There was the Czar leaning his arms on the table, raising his arched eyebrows, and protesting, 'My dear fellow, you do look far ahead. I cannot see beyond my nose, and if you will enlarge my vision, pray confine your speculations to one at a time.'

There was Alice exclaiming, 'Oh! is not Mr. Penryn fit to be a professor, a deep eccentric professor, who sees everything that no other body can see, and nothing that is plain to the rest of the world?'

It appeared as if the painstaking, comparing, and certifying processes which Mrs. Penfeather had instanced as belonging to German training, and as the salvation of German brains, had deserted him.

Sometimes Mary remonstrated gently with him: she quoted a German proverb on theories

being grey while the twigs by which one held on to life were golden : she tried to bring him back to his successful invention of the bobbin and the solid fruit which it had promised.

But he was more restive and pettish than she could have imagined. He showed her that he believed he knew his own business, whether of study, achievement, or profit from the achievement, better than she could know it, and intended to keep it in his own hands. He even turned upon her and reminded her, with something like a taunt, of the backgoing condition of the chemical works under Heywood's management, as if that were the question in point. 'A fine finale they are coming to,' he said, shrugging his shoulders ; 'they have been prosecuted only for dross, and now the dross fails, and there is the conclusion of the matter.'

'But, Taff, don't you think the dross must form an important consideration in all such aims while the world is in its present state, and that we must take the world as we find it?' she asked, despairingly.

'And don't you see, Mary, that if Honeywood had not been a bond slave to ascertained results, he might have hit on affinities which would have put a few thalers into his employer's purse, though it is a shame to mention them in the same breath with making the world wiser and richer in its wisdom.'

Mary held that it was carrying matters with

a high hand, and being imperious and unmindful of what he owed to her—of what she was giving up for his sake, that he should be more wrapped up, and more in the air than ever with regard to his schemes.

He thought that it was not generous of her, when she counted the cost of his banishment to England, and of his accepting through her the smallest bounty from her father, that she should dispute with him on his rooted opinions, and show ominous signs of interfering with his freedom of action.

It is probable that both Mary and Taff Penryn were disposed at this date, and that in spite of their mutual love, to over-estimate their individual sacrifices. It is certain that in the case of a woman like Mary who has a judgment of her own, there always lurks a temptation to rely on her judgment and cling to it—to seek to work out her will, even where the will of another is concerned, as she sees it best.

As constraint and alienation arose between Mary and Taff Penryn, other adverse elements in conjunction with the first, came into play to widen the breach. Peter Honeywood, who had grown up to have a clear and tenacious eye to what men like him call the main chance in life, and who, when he had once received the suggestion of bettering his position by marrying Mary Carteret, had been reluctant to resign it in

favour of another, and that other an inspired fool like Taff Penryn, was quick to detect the growing stiffness and coolness between the engaged couple. He leaped to the conclusion that they were both tired of their bargain, and that there would be a rupture from which he had a good chance of profiting.

So Alice's brother backed zealously Alice's endeavours to make neighbourly gaiety out of Taff Penryn's visit, and to be always in the van of the gaiety—until his high spirits and subdued assiduities, in his attendance on Mary, attracted his sister's notice, and awoke her to the personal risk of the dawning quarrel between Mary and Taff Penryn.

Alice had felt no disposition to coquetry with Taff Penryn on her own account, even if Taff had not been in his most wilful moods simple-minded and straightforward, and in the middle of his general brotherliness, indifferent in the sense of love to all women, save one. Once more Alice was not what is called a flirt. In all her dealings with men she meant business, not pleasure; she was not at all silly, or sentimental, or giddy. She had none of that craving which made it Fra Carteret's first impulse to attract the attention of the public, and, if possible, to hold all the men of the company in her chains. And Alice had also a sensible impression that it would be against her interests as a marrying woman to establish the

reputation of a flirt. Therefore policy combined with her natural character to prevent her from thinking for a moment of the futile move of putting in her oar to draw Taff Penryn to her side. The Czar's conviction, and the conduct which the conviction induced, merely influenced Alice in the way of renewing all her old apprehensions on her brother's—or rather on her own account. It sent her in a panic to ingratiate herself into Taff Penryn's confidence—but only to insinuate to him that Mary was not in earnest in her coldness, was in reality devoted to him, and so, if possible, to prevent his breaking with her.

The wretched Taff was by nature the most guileless of mortals, but wounded love taught him guile—he saw through Alice's object in his turn. 'She wishes to keep her brother from Mary; the fellow is after her, and that may be the reason of the difference in her conduct to me.'

The key to some of the discords of the position was not in the hands of all, yet it might have been easily attainable.

Never had there been such a failure as was Taff Penryn's ill-timed visit to those who had most to do with it. It produced an accumulation of misadventures and blunders. Mary, on looking back on that imbroglio afterwards, used to think that it was like a horrible prosaic version of the contradictions and inconsistencies of a *Midsummer Night's Dream*.

The mischief came to a climax one day when the whole four mischief-making people were over at the Warren together. Mary had not projected the party; events seemed to happen in these days without her having the least control over them. In her present mood she would hardly have trusted herself willingly to go over to the Warren in the company of Taff Penryn. But she was under the necessity of carrying a message personally from her mother to the gardener's wife, who was in charge of the house; and it befell without any wish of Mary's that Alice Honeywood accompanied her to see a place of which she had often heard. It also happened that the young men, who had been away together some distance by the railway, making two in a shooting party to which the Czar had carried his guest, alighted at the station near the Warren and walked up to meet the ladies and accompany them home.

'We are not guilty of a pic-nic without a chaperon,' Alice protested, 'but we shall pass a very pleasant hour in Mr. Carteret's grounds, if you will be so good as make us welcome in his absence; and perhaps we may be allowed to go into the house and rest—I should like so much to see all the holes and corners of such a fine old place. Not fine, do you say? At least it is old and interesting, you cannot deny that; and perhaps your housekeeper will let us have a glass of milk. I am sure it will be delightful.'

It was not a delightful prospect for Mary, and it was anything rather than a delightful experience in the realisation.

The season had advanced to autumn—an early and rainy autumn—and the day, though fair, was grey, misty, and depressing. Mary had to acknowledge, to her mortification, as one of the many little stings which was helping the main ache in her heart, that she had never seen the Warren—her dear old home, which it had nearly broken her own and her father's heart to quit—look to so little advantage.

The old-fashioned red house, with the bushes and trees on its little lawn crowding to its very threshold, did not show well in autumn. The living gold of the laburnum avenue, when the place was in its glory, had long been shed, and laburnum pods—even crooked, scantily-leaved laburnum boughs, are not sightly.

The fir wood was cheerless on such a day, the moor beyond was brown rather than purple, but they were exhilarating compared to the rest of the place. In the garden the turf paths were saturated with wet, even though they hung on a slope. The vegetables and old flowers were in a tangle of decay. The lingering pallid roses, the tall dishevelled white phloxes, were wan in their colourlessness. A few delicate autumn crocuses of a dim lilac colour, and without the relief of green leaves, looked like the ghosts of their spring

sisters, and served but to make the borders more melancholy. The little brook was muddy and had overflowed its banks.

The abundant foliage round the house was still in full luxuriance ; but it had the monotonous sombre green of leaves which are ripe to withering, but which the winds have not yet loosened, or the frost burnt into dying splendour. The little sodden lawn and the house itself were shaded and darkened to an oppressive degree. The absence of light combined with the damp had contributed to produce a gruesome crop of fungi, suggestive of 'Dead men's Fingers,' that ghastliest growth of dank, sunless woods. The walls of the house were dismal with weather stains.

Inside, the overgrowth of superannuated furniture, every article of which was precious to Mary, looked, in its huddled together, half-packed-up state, equally mouldering and forlorn.

Of course the absence of the family was the principal cause of the prevailing dreariness of the scene. Yet Mary, with her heart sore as she marked the unmistakable disappointment in the Honeywoods' faces, and the involuntary shiver which Taff Penryn gave, could not resist appealing to him piteously, 'Was it not different when you were here last?'

'If you ask me,' he said, with fatal sincerity, 'I am afraid I thought even then that it was time it was pulled down and cleared away. I cannot

understand why people will cling to fallen-down and buried-alive houses, because they were comfortable and cheerful enough for their forefathers.'

'Oh! how can you say so, Mr. Penryn?' said Alice, rallying from her disappointment and desiring to say something agreeable. 'Why this must be the very place where the Sleeping Beauty lived.' Alice thought in her heart, 'I had no idea it was such a pokey old hole, and in such a state of dilapidation. But then it had its Lady Lucy once on a day; and the Scudamores—even Lord Coventry's family, with all the best county people, have been at home here,' Alice finished her meditations respectfully.

'If the Sleeping Beauty could have got leave to dream,' Taff Penryn qualified her first observation, referring to the dismal clamorous cawing of a crowd of rooks overhead; 'or if she could have found air to breathe during her long slumber. I confess I should feel choked here, and I should fear to move—certainly the Sleeping Beauty did not indulge in much movement—lest I should strike my head on a chandelier or my elbow against a china bowl.'

Mary was deeply hurt, far more so than she had any cause to be, for what was merely too candid criticism from a man who did not covet what his father had rejected. She contented herself with saying a little superciliously, 'I rather wonder that anyone who has ever lived on

the *étage* of a German house in winter, should miss air.'

'Oh! I say,' said the Czar, bustling in with his share of the conversation, 'we should all be very glad to be the owners of such a nice little place as this, whether we had ancestors or not. I should think we would, Miss Carteret. Nothing could be easier than to enlarge the public rooms by throwing out bow-windows—I wonder Mr. Carteret had not thought of it, only there would be the low roofs left still. I should certainly clear away the wood from the neighbourhood of the house; there might be fifty pounds got out of the thinning, and it would never be missed.'

'I would have nothing touched,' said Mary, almost vehemently; 'I love every tree and bush, every table and chair, though I dare say it sounds laughable to some people to hear me say so. I have been happier in that house than I can ever hope to be again.'

There was a little awkward pause after her words, for their tone had startled her companions. At last, Taff Penryn broke the silence by saying, with dry curiosity, 'Perhaps you are sorry that you ever left this place?'

'Perhaps I am,' said Mary, in a low, but still audible voice.

Ten minutes afterwards—when the party were having tea instead of the milk which Alice Honeywood had proposed in the dining-room, and Mary was sitting in what had been her mother's place,

pouring out tea and trying to feel only a courteous hostess—Taff Penryn announced incidentally, and as a matter of no particular moment to anybody save himself, that he thought of leaving next day and going to London, where he had some friends among the Germans there whom he wished to see before he returned to Germany.

Mary did not contradict him or make any remark.

The Czar pricked his ears.

Only Alice, in blank dismay, cried out, ‘Oh! Mr. Penryn, you will not leave us so unexpectedly?’

‘I beg your pardon, Miss Honeywood,’ he said, quickly, ‘I have stayed too long; and, what is more, I am not sure that I was not a fool ever to come.’

It seemed better to turn off his words in the light of a jest. He saw that himself the next moment, and acquiesced in the treatment which they received, following Alice’s suit in laughing at what she called his overpowering modesty.

But when the party were preparing to go, and Mary remained behind to speak to the old servant, he came back and followed her into one of the little window recesses which she knew so well. ‘Mary,’ he said, with agitation, ‘I have often thought since I have come here that you were ashamed of me, and that you were sorry for what you had done.’

‘No, Taff,’ said Mary faintly, yet with some

cold pride and smouldering indignation ; ‘but if you have made a mistake it is not too late—it may be wiser to think better of it——’

‘That is enough,’ he interrupted her passionately ; ‘it is not necessary to say any more ; but it is well that we have spoken out, since we have both thought better of it.’

It was all that passed between them. And the two joined as best they might—in a stunned spasmodic fashion they feared—in the general conversation after they had returned to the Honeywoods and during their railway journey to Sandford, neither of them knowing whether Alice Honeywood or her brother remarked any change, or guessed that a crisis had come and gone.

At the station Kit Must met Mary with the Whitechapel cart, as he had met her and Mrs. Penfeather on a former occasion. And on the plea of Mrs. Penfeather’s being more unwell that evening than she had yet been, and requiring her presence, Mary took leave of the others, including Taff Penryn.

She felt, as she did so, there was a tacit understanding between them that the brief touch of the hand, with the eyes averted, was their parting ; yet she drove away calmly. She could even contain herself so far as to enter Mrs. Penfeather’s room and see to her comfort without giving any sign to disturb the rest which was so necessary for her friend’s recovery.

It was only after Mary was alone in her room with the door locked that she gave way. She threw herself on her bed weeping as if her heart would break, recalling Taff Penryn's shining eyes and quivering lips, when she met him on his coming, and telling herself that she had killed her happiness and his, because of her slavery to conventionality, her pride, her temper. Then she sat up and put back her disordered hair, rose and walked up and down the room with her head erect, her eyes dry, her lips pressed together, saying that it was well if Taff Penryn had found that he could not live with her in England and be happy—if he was so carried away by his schemes and dreams that he had ceased to care for her welfare and peace, or for any reasonable person's censure, until he went the length of refusing to earn his share in their maintenance, or to spare his powers for such an earning. He might end by spending on his gambler's craving the very provision her best friend had made for their livelihood, and by denying what was due to her father in their occupation of the farm, while she should not be able to hinder the wrong. If so, it was well, as Taff Penryn had said, that decisive words had been spoken between them, that they had both thought better of it, and parted before it was too late.

CHAPTER LIII.

MAKING HAY WHEN THE SUN SHINES, WITH THE SEASON'S CROP CARRIED AWAY BY A THUNDER-STORM.

It was all over—nothing could or should be done. The couple had seen that the proposed marriage was not for their good or their happiness, and so had broken it off. Taff Penryn had gone back to Germany.

Mary told the news almost stolidly, and would not be shaken in her statement, or brought to enter into particulars to the dismayed Mrs. Penfeather, when the latter was sufficiently recovered to receive it.

In like manner, Mary wrote a brief, dogged sounding announcement to her father. 'I don't know, papa, if you will be surprised—I certainly think you will not be sorry—to hear that Taff Penryn and I have broken off our engagement. He came over here, and we saw our mistake and amended it in time. He has been gone again for three days. Still I should like to live on at Sandford for the present—at least, if mamma

and you do not particularly object. I have a fancy to be independent, and I wish to nurse Mrs. Penfeather back to greater health. In spite of her late illness, I am not of opinion, and, what is more to the purpose, neither is Dr. Godfey, that the neighbourhood disagrees with her. Kit Must allows that he is pleased with the weight of the wheat and barley this year; but he fears that the rainy weather will prove injurious to the potatoes, etc., etc.'

Mr. Carteret wrote back:—'I cannot tell if I am surprised; unquestionably, I am relieved to hear that you have seen fit to put an end to your engagement. If you prefer being at Sandford, your mother and I are willing that you should remain there with Mrs. Penfeather in the meanwhile.'

The sentences, concise and matter of fact, after the fashion of her own, did not read as if the loss of Taff Penryn had given back her father to Mary. Forfeited love could not be so easily restored.

Together with her father's letter, Mary had a voluminous epistle from her mother. Mrs. Carteret was a fluent letter-writer, but, what was strong in her character, somehow ran away in her fluency as a scribe. Her letters were weak in their amplitude compared to her conversation. In this case, too, her natural sympathy with her daughter was diverted away, dimmed, and mud-

dled by dissatisfaction with Mary's reticence, which implied that she wanted no support from her mother, and by Mrs. Carteret's disapproval in the abstract, almost as great as that of the Germans among whom she lived, of the breaking off of an engagement.

Mrs. Carteret only concurred in Mary's proposal that she should be left at Sandford, because it would be awkward for her daughter to come back at once to Dresden under the circumstances. The constancy of Mrs. Carteret's faith in Mrs. Penfeather was not shaken, and she was not prepared to say, on the spur of the emergency, to what other English guardian Mary could be better entrusted. As to Mary's fancy for independence, her mother devoted two crossed and re-crossed pages to conveying to her daughter her unchangeable answer to such language, and the ideas which the language expressed, in a girl. Mary saw that she had already well-nigh lost the recent hold which she had gained on her mother's affections.

Notwithstanding Mary's words, she was conscious that it was very bad for her to continue at Sandford, which was to have been her and Taff Penryn's married home ; but she judged rightly, and perhaps her father argued in like manner, that it would have been still worse, and not to be thought of, for her to have returned on Taff Penryn's footsteps to Dresden. She had no near

relation in England. Mr. Carteret had been an only child; Mrs. Carteret's sole available married sister was in India, and on her Mary could not be bestowed without infinite trouble.

Mary set herself to make the best of what was very bad for her.

Just as she had declined to languish for Taff Penryn when he had stood aloof in the earlier struggles of their love, so she refused to moan over the fact that he had taken her at a hastily-spoken word and given her up.

The iron entered into her soul, but she was a brave, high-spirited woman to hide the wound, while it half blinded her to many things around her. She went about her usual occupations and interests with even greater energy than before, trying Mrs. Penfeather by her unremitting self-command and unfailing attention—exasperating Kit Must by making him subject the hieroglyphics of his mental accounts to be worked out thoroughly on paper, and by requiring clear reasons for his instinctive conclusions in husbandry.

‘However am I to say why I seed the smut weren’t in the wheat, and the worm were to be found in the turmits?’ he complained, wrathfully. ‘Nobody telled me, and I ain’t prepared to tell it to anybody, least of all to a woman as is putting on me in the shape of a missus, which I never bargained for. I ain’t a’going to tell—’cause I

can't. I knowed it without them whys and hows, and that is enough for me, and that should be enough for a 'oman. My old 'oman, who has a right, if any 'oman has, lets well alone, and never bothers a man with plaguy questions. A young 'oman as is made for a couple of young fools running after should mind her own bizness.'

Above all, Mary, in her total obliviousness, instead of shrinking from familiar intercourse with the Honeywoods, courted it as she had not yet done. She was too magnanimous to blame them for what had happened, and she wished to show them that she exculpated them from all blame. She sought diversion in Alice's constant flow of cleverish airy small talk, and soothing in Peter Honeywood's respectful friendship. In her own engrossing misery and her strenuous efforts to master it, she proved impervious to what in other circumstances would have been the obvious terror and desperation of Alice Honeywood, who was on the eve of standing at bay.

Mary would not take any hint from Mrs. Penfeather in her present frame of mind, and after what had passed, Mrs. Penfeather could not bring herself to do more than hint.

Mary's temporary obtuseness, combined with her restlessness, served to bring about the catastrophe for which, after it happened, she was ready to blame her own too-confident stupidity.

In the necessity to be incessantly occupied,

and, if possible, not with sedentary occupations, Mary had been several times to the Honeywoods besides having Alice with her, planning and performing multifarious feats in country walks—in the construction of a fernery—in the preparation of decorations for the village school-room, and the selection of pieces in prose and verse for lectures and readings which were to be given to the work-people under the manager's patronage.

Alice had stood gallantly to her post, never flinching, never losing sight of her brother and Mary, for one instant, in what Alice in her hallucination was driven to conclude—and she was aware that her brother saw it in the same light—was Mary's determination, to promote the Czar to the office vacated by Taff Penryn. Alice felt like the leader in a forlorn hope, and hovered between two extremes. She might suddenly turn, fling back indignantly Mary's cloak of friendship and refuse to see and speak to her, or to treat her as other than the deadly enemy she was—if such a bootless defiance would serve to scare the principals, and would not rather provoke them to laugh in Alice's face with scornful pity, while it precipitated instead of postponing the marriage. She might throw down her arms at once, and cast herself upon Mary's mercy, relying upon her generosity, in which Alice had some faith to begin with, as well as on the Czar's

old known affection, to make her downfall as easy for her as possible.

But Mary and the Czar were too much for the poor sister, as the two against the one generally prove in such unequal warfare. The fact of one of the two being profoundly unconscious only armed the active assailant the better to elude the solitary defender's surveillance.

Mary thought it was by the purest accident that, as she was walking across the stubble to look at her cows which were grazing there, the Czar came quickly up and joined her in the scrutiny. She could not tell that he had been watching her door at intervals all the afternoon, by the aid of the telescope he kept in his office at the works, and which could rake the country for miles round. He had a particular motive for intercepting her that day if possible, since Alice—'jealous little monkey, watched them, as a cat watches mice, indoors.' It was not bad sport to tease Alice, who had no business to interfere, but ought to know her place better, as well as to think of the interests of the brother who had been so good to her. Still, time was passing. He had heard a great deal of making hay when the sun shone, and of hearts being caught on the rebound. Besides, there was to be a meeting the next day of the owners of the works, who were to come down from town by train for the purpose; they had pledged themselves to decide either way,

whether the works should be tried at an enlarged outlay, which might ensure greater returns, or whether the affair should be thrown up altogether, and the machinery sold to help to defray the loss.

Mary had no clue to deliberate design, interested motive, or pressing obligation, as she sauntered along with the Czar in the dim haze and peculiar stillness—the matured sobriety of an autumn afternoon, when only the robin among the birds is not silent, when just the dropping shots of distant sportsmen can be faintly heard breaking the quiet satisfaction of nature, which has yielded her fruits and is waiting for the wild winds of the equinox to lull her to her long wintry sleep.

The couple chatted easily enough—on the appearance of the fleecy veil of clouds and the weather it portended—on the scent of the thyme and mint their footsteps crushed out, and the aromatic fragrance of which, on the moist air, is one of the most closely interwoven associations with autumn in English fields—on the black and white and ruddy-brown herd of cows cropping the clover, with the swishing sound of a scythe, before the pedestrians; and which of the cattle were Teeswater and which Devon.

If Honeywood showed any absence of mind or hesitation, Mary, in the feverish and wearied pre-occupation which was habitual to her at this time, never perceived it.

In the end, taking his cue from their last topic,

the Czar began to talk very sensibly and considerably to her of the burden which a farm in its stock and its crops must be to the ablest and best instructed woman, whose sex and delicate nurture disqualified her from much of its management, while her factotum, though skilful, was so crabbed in his humour as Kit Must.

Mary combated the reasoning, not with so much spirit as she had once shown, but with some interest. ‘You are like the rest of the world, Mr. Honeywood, bent on establishing the uselessness of women; and yet you have so good a sister who takes such excellent care of you and your house! But perhaps you have no objection to women being useful when it is on men’s behalf. I observe the endless argument has very often this reservation in men’s mouths. I think you might leave us work, even when we are inclined to do it on our own account. If you only knew, how many of us could work, how some of us would like to throw ourselves into it—not into such work as this, which is like a child’s being set to drive, while the groom behind has his eye on the horses, and is ready to take the reins at any moment—but into real work of our own, and for which we alone should be responsible—as authors and artists, though women, are responsible for their work—but you don’t know, and so no more need be said about it,’ ended Mary, abruptly.

‘I beg your pardon, Miss Carteret,’ objected

the Czar, hurriedly. ‘Don’t let us finish the discussion in this way. I dare say I am selfish, and yet must it be selfishness alone which moves a man to offer a woman his best support? I am very sensible that you are above me in all respects; still, if my admiration and regard, the devotion of my life——’

‘Mr. Honeywood, what are you saying?’ demanded Mary, so sharply that he stopped and looked at her. Her eyes were wide open and fixed upon him, instead of being lowered with modest deprecation and yielding compliance. Her face grew pale, not red. She really stood aghast—not only hurt, but incensed.

Perhaps a woman’s incredulity to a man’s profession of love is never flattering to him—never ominous of success to his suit; but this was another incredulity from that which Mary had brought to the Graf’s flourish of trumpets.

Mary’s wounded heart revolted against this unexpected love making, as against a march stolen upon her basely, with cruel advantage taken of her suffering—no less than of her innocent friendliness towards the Honeywoods.

Her excited mind, working confusedly, went back and asked, in trepidation and distress, had this uncalled-for impertinence of the Czar’s anything to do with Taff Penryn’s withdrawal? Had there been treacherous, artful machinations, as well as mutual pride and obstinacy, which had

worked only too well, to separate her and her true lover?

Mary was suddenly stung into something which was the farthest from the woman—haughty, hard, and pitiless scorn.

There is a tale of an aristocratic beauty, like Lady Mary Wortley Montague, being addressed in words of passion by a hanger-on of the family, who, if he were like Mr. Pope in nothing else, resembled him in this, that his bodily presence was insignificant. ‘May I hope?’ pleaded the suppliant, falling on his knees, and putting a hand of half timid, half daring arrest on his lady’s gown. ‘Hope!’ echoed his mistress, shaking him off as she would have shaken off a troublesome animal, ‘hop off, sir.’

Mary did not utter hot mocking words fit to blister the speaker’s lips even as they scathed the ears of the hearer; she only stared at the Czar so as to make him wince, even at the pitch of courage to which he had wound himself up, and to shake the castle he had built on her favour to the very foundation. Still he was too much of a man to shrink back like a whipped hound on the first motion of his mistress’s hand, and neither to vouchsafe her the explanation which she so boldly demanded, nor to make one effort to plead his cause.

‘I think my meaning must be plain enough, Miss Carteret,’ he said, summoning up his spirit and hardihood. ‘I have followed you this afternoon to ask you plainly if you will have me for a

husband—if you will let me take your burdens, and bear them henceforth.’

It seemed as if Mary were never to receive a proposal of marriage with that becoming union of dignity and suavity with which such overtures are heard by many women who not only take the proposals as simply their due, but lay themselves out for any amount of them, and delightedly dispose with soft regret and gentle apology of the surplus number of their trophies.

She had laughed at the Graf; she had cried weak, blissful tears to Taff Penryn; now she turned flaming and scolded the Czar, ‘like a vixen,’ as he described it to himself afterwards, with every nerve still tingling. Yet, with all Mary’s unhappy incapacity for behaving herself properly where offers of marriage were concerned, it is possible that if she had detected a true ring in the love speeches, she would have answered them with more consideration for the feelings of the speaker.

After all she showed some reticence; she did not accuse the Czar of what she suspected; she did not say, ‘Take my burdens! that is not your meaning, sir; you think I may help you to bear yours; and I should have been willing, yes, glad if I had entertained one grain of that kind of feeling for you—if I had not given all to another, as you ought to have known perfectly well, as it is a shame to you and an insult to me to imply that you have not believed. Do you consider me a

weathercock, that I should be engaged to Taff Penryn last month and to you this? Oh, give me patience with the fickleness and folly of men!’ But Mary only thought this; she gave utterance to nothing worse than, ‘How can you ask me such a question, Mr. Honeywood? Did I ever lead you on in order to subject you to the humiliation of an unqualified refusal? I should despise and hate myself if I were capable of such conduct. Do you know it is presumption in a man to address a woman with words of love and marriage if she has not given him the slightest reason to suppose that she reciprocates his sentiments? Don’t you see he must either be a fool or he must suppose her to be worse than a fool?’

‘I don’t pretend,’ said the Czar, writhing under the castigation, ‘to be a master of the etiquette of such situations among ladies and gentlemen.’

‘I said nothing of ladies and gentlemen,’ Mary interrupted him imperiously; ‘I spoke of men and women.’

‘And I am not aware,’ he continued, sulkily, taking no notice of her interruption, ‘that your manner was such as to render me intolerably presumptuous in speaking to you as I have done; other people have been misled as well as I; another woman, your friend, saw matters in the same light.’

Now it is certain that if Alice Honeywood had zealously promoted her brother’s marriage, he would not have quoted her authority on this

occasion ; but it was the knowledge of her hostility, and that she had believed against her wishes—the recollection of which staggered him still and prompted him to his rash words.

‘Do you mean that Miss Honeywood set you on—that you were both in a conspiracy to misjudge me?’ cried Mary, more bitterly than ever.

‘No, Miss Carteret, I mean nothing of the kind. But why should my meaning be of any consequence to you? You have given me my answer with a vengeance,’ said the suitor, standing still, raising his hat, goaded in his turn into a little fierce superciliousness in the gesture, and turning his back and leaving her.

Mary went straight home to keep the incident a dead secret from Mrs. Penfeather, and to ask herself, in despair, what was she to do now—what new misfortune would befall her? How could she encounter either of the Honeywoods again after what she considered the abuse of her friendship? She had grown to like and depend upon them more and more. Alice’s good nature and good will—though the last had never been severely tried—with her perennial cheerfulness, had been a boon to Mary ; so had been the Czar’s manliness, and what Mary had held his honesty and kindness. Now she had to endure the cynical light cast on these qualities, as they were seen based on motives of barefaced self-interest and crafty calculation.

CHAPTER LIV.

WINTER BRINGS AN OLD FRIEND.

ALICE HONEYWOOD on the alert, and taking alarm from her brother's longer absence than usual, sought him, as she had done once before, on his way from the works. Not coming up with him, she went on, bravely exposing herself to chemical fumes and her brother's displeasure, till she invaded the sanctum of his office, to which her trimly elegant figure was generally a stranger.

She did not find Miss Carteret in the course of being conducted over the works ; nor did she discover the Czar fingering a pistol instead of his telescope ; but she did see him up to the elbows in books and papers, and working so furiously that his very hair was in disorder. 'Preparing for the gentlemen to-morrow, Pat? I beg your pardon for disturbing you, but I wondered why you were so late. I'll go, now that I have seen you are all right,' she said, preparing to beat a graceful retreat.

'No ; you may stay,' growled the Czar, with

a pen like a bone between his teeth, not altogether sorry to be disturbed and not offended by her solicitude, though he laughed a little sardonically as he added, the next moment, 'I am neither stolen nor strayed; but since you are here you had better wait and hear something that I have to tell you. I shall walk up with you presently.' He got off his seat and turned his back on his work, stretching himself with an affectation of unconcern. 'For the gentlemen to-morrow—yes, and to close my accounts. We'll give over the house and furniture to the agent from whom we took them. You must set about your packing without loss of time.'

'Peter!' cried Alice, in consternation, giving him his whole homely name, 'I thought it was not to be settled till to-morrow; and the last time you spoke of it you were quite hopeful that the works would get another and fairer trial than they have had recently.'

'Some other manager must undertake the concern then,' he said, shortly, 'I sha'n't; I'm sick of it.'

'Oh! what has come over you, dear?' remonstrated the sister, bewildered by the unusual mood in her active-minded, rather belligerently-inclined brother. 'I thought you never would knock under, so long as there was the least chance. And what are we to do?' she went on tearfully. 'Are you able to think of our dear little home, in

which we seem to have been settled only the other day, and in which we have taken so much pride and pleasure, being broken up, if any effort will prevent the sacrifice?’

He shrugged his shoulders and remained obstinate. ‘I shall try for another situation, of course, and you must go back to Uncle Jim till I can see my way to having you with me again. Be thankful, Alice, that we have no debt, and that we go without disgrace, whatever may be said or thought,’ he finished, half sternly.

It was easy for him to speak. It was a very different thing for a man to be cast on the world to what it was for a woman. And yet it was quickly borne in upon her that the Czar was driven on by some galling thought which rendered him at once headstrong and stubborn.

‘Pat,’ she said, fixing her eyes upon him, ‘Mary Carteret has something to do with this.’

‘What can Mary Carteret have to do with it?’ he asked, in impatient evasion; and then a double impulse seized him to overwhelm her with his tidings and to secure her sympathy. ‘If you will have it, I have this afternoon been and gone and done what you have been such a fool as to fear that I should do for weeks and months. I asked Miss Carteret to marry me, and she rejected me with contumely—there’s for you!’

‘She could not,’ gasped Alice; ‘you must have been mistaken, Pat?’

‘Men don’t often make such mistakes, do they?’ and he gave a forced laugh to carry out his bravado.

‘Oh, darling, I am so grieved for you,’ said Alice, in a lamentable voice, the sincerity of which was unmistakable. She flew and kissed him fondly, and stroked his hair, hardly knowing what she was doing in her love and sorrow, and yet having the crumb of comfort, in the midst of her distress, of knowing that he was hers still to lament with and be resentful for. She had forgotten everything save her brother with a forgetfulness that was balm to him. ‘I am so vexed for your sake that I had anything to do with her.’ She kept grieving and reflecting furiously on Mary. ‘What a flirt and jilt she must be—heartless, insolent, mad!’

‘Come, come, Alice,’ interposed the Czar, ‘we must not call names because she refused me. She had a perfect right; and as for the manner—well, that might be a fine lady’s mode of doing the deed.’

‘She is none such a fine lady,’ insisted Alice, speaking as her Aunt Jim might have spoken, casting grammar and polish to the winds, in her sisterly zeal. ‘The Carterets of the Warren are no great affair—ruined small gentry—to give themselves airs, as that odious Fra did at school. But, Pat, I would not let her have the victory. I should pluck up a spirit.’

‘Pluck up a fiddlestick, Alice!’—the Czar bounced up and declined to hear reason—‘with the works on their last legs, and with plenty of people ready to make their charitable remarks on the altered terms we must stand on with the family at Sandford—to say that I have had a bucket of cold water thrown on my pretensions! No, thanks. I can’t, and, what is more, I won’t stand it.’

The Czar had shown hitherto no want of cleverness, energy, and perseverance in his trade; but in spite of what he had been led to say, with modest satisfaction, in the first interview he had with Mary, of the rewards he had won and the promise he had given in his particular career, it was his trade and not his calling after all. He possessed it; it did not go far to possess him. Perhaps the distinction was a safe one on the whole—only he could be induced to relinquish a last opportunity connected with his work, on purely personal grounds.

The present grounds were unmistakably mortified vanity. He had liked Mary as indeed she had liked him; but liking is not love, and he would never have dreamt of seeking her for his wife, apart from Alice’s jealousy having put it into his head, and had she not been her father’s daughter. If disappointed love slays its thousands by dragging them down to vice, mortified vanity slays its tens of thousands by spurring them

on to folly. What huge follies—to which Peter Honeywood's abandoning the doubtful speculation of the chemical works at Gorebridge was as sober wisdom—will not reasonable men commit when stung to frenzy by trampled on and outraged vanity!

So it happened the first time that Mary Carteret saw Alice Honeywood, after Mary's dismissal of the Czar, was on the occasion of Alice's making her P. P. C. call at Sandford, without any kind of tragic solemnity in her air. Alice had not dreamt of intermitting the call because of what had passed between Mary and her brother. She was one of those women who have a special aptitude for the social hypocrisies which are chiefly attributed to women, because, when brought home to men, they are on a larger scale and receive a different name.

Alice was not going to let her pride outgo her profit in losing sight of any possible advantage which she might derive from her acquaintance with Mary Carteret, neither did she intend to allow Mary, in Alice's own words, to have the victory.

Alice was there to carry off her own defeat, as well as the Czar's, gallantly, though in reality her heart was bleeding for the destruction of their establishment, the separation which must follow, and her own doubtful prospects in the future. She talked serenely, and even gaily, of the dul-

ness of the neighbourhood in the approaching winter; she touched with sisterly pride on the Czar's being sure not to have the slightest difficulty in finding a situation in a livelier quarter. He was so much thought of, he had such high recommendations—from the gentlemen who were giving up the chemical works, among others—that it was rather to be wondered at he had put off so much time in a limited sphere, only it was gaining experience. He did not regret leaving, however. She could see that his spirits rose at the idea of a wider field; of course, that reconciled her to the trouble of removing, and to the pain of parting from friends. Here Alice made a gracious inclination to Mrs. Penfeather and Mary, as if it was she who had been the condescending person from the beginning. The Czar was intensely busy, so she must beg Mrs. Penfeather and Mary to excuse him, if it should so happen that he could not make a spare moment to call and say good-bye. In case of such an unfortunate accident, she had brought his card, and Alice drew it from her case and put it down intrepidly. Finally, she reverted to the numerous friends to whom she owed visits, before she should settle down again with the Czar, as he would be impatient for her to do—and she must say she thoroughly enjoyed planning and arranging a new house; she really believed that she had a little talent in that way.

Mary could not help being remorseful in pro-

portion to her antagonist's gallantry, and feeling softened and sorry ; she would have parted more cordially with Alice than Alice would let her.

‘So there is an end of that song,’ thought Mary, gazing a little pensively from the window after the vanishing figure. ‘I wonder if I have much to do with their going ; it seems a poor return for their first neighbourliness, which I don't doubt—now that I am cool enough to think it all over—was genuine enough at the time. Of course he did not care a straw for me in any sense that could have justified him in speaking as he did ; still his ambition had formed hopes which I am afraid were rudely dispelled. I rather think she knows. He might have kept it to himself ; he could have been sure I would never have mentioned it.’

‘Mary,’ said Mrs. Penfeather, breaking in upon her companion's thoughts, ‘may I say now, that it is probably well, so far as we are concerned, that the Honeywoods are going ? though they were good neighbours, and we shall miss them, and that is keeping out of count the important fact that the closing of the works will be a serious evil to the poor people who were engaged in them. It is always uncomfortable for a man and woman to meet at close quarters after such an enlightenment as has taken place between you and the poor Czar.’

‘Mrs. Penfeather,’ said Mary, with scarlet

cheeks ; ‘ I admit nothing ; but if you suspected trouble in the air, why did you not warn me ? ’

‘ Do me the justice, my dear, of remembering that I tried, but it was too late, if it could have been of much good at any time. ’

‘ And do you think that Alice was so left to herself as to entertain a desire that I should become her sister-in-law ? ’ enquired Mary, harping on a riddle which she could not solve to her satisfaction, and of the true reading of which she had not the most distant conception.

‘ Entertain a desire ! ’ exclaimed Mrs. Penfeather, bluntly. ‘ Are you dreaming, my dear child ? Are you crazy with vanity ? The prospect was her greatest bugbear. You and your influence over her brother have been the terror of Alice Honeywood’s life for the greater part of this autumn. ’

‘ Mrs. Penfeather, ’ protested Mary, whose turn it was to have her pride and vanity laid in the dust, ‘ that any woman should have trembled lest I might win her brother ! To accuse me of wiles for the purpose, as I daresay she has accused me ! ’

‘ It was not you altogether whom she feared— you may have that satisfaction ; it was any woman. I daresay she would have liked your supremacy no worse than another’s. You must consider her precarious position, and how desperately she clung to it. ’

Winter was come with its stripped bareness in

the corn country round Sandford. There was no prattling Alice or bluff Czar to break in upon the gloom of the year, and the gloom of one heart at Sandford.

The Honeywoods' closed up cottage was a melancholy object in Mary's walks every time she turned her steps in the direction of the village; neither was the village itself cheering.

It was not like that other village with which Mary had been familiar from childhood, and which had grown up in the shadow—though that had not been very extensive at the best—of the Warren. There, for good or for evil, 'the gentle folks at the house' had continued to be a potent influence. Here, although the land belonged to the same proprietor, he or any member of his family had not, till lately, been resident at Sandford; and there was no house approaching the rank of the Warren—unless the cottage of the manager, under whom the greater portion of the men worked—to take its place. A village of workmen in any kind of factory afforded in itself very different elements from those to be found in a village of agricultural labourers. Mary had been taught to appreciate what advantages lay in the former, in their greater independence and intelligence. She was aware that such a state of life as existed in Tannenthal could not be restored in England, and that the restoration would not be desirable if it were possible, since the change was a stage in progress.

Yet she smarted under the consequences in the present instance.

The villagers, who owed Mary no allegiance, were now disposed to pay her and the household at Sandford scanty courtesy, associating her, as they contrived to do, with the straits to which they were reduced by this season's closing of the chemical works. Common rumour, which rises, gathers, and prevails with the greatest vigour in humble quarters, had got it, that Mr. Honeywood had been 'a-courting of squire's daughter at Sandford; that she had given him "the go-by," and he in a pet had thrown up the works, and made his employers throw them up likewise.'

The Czar, because of his general fairness, firmness, and never-say-dieness, had been a greater favourite with his workpeople than Alice with her maids, or her poorer neighbours.

Strange to say, he did not lose by the tolerably correct solution they had arrived at with regard to the cause of his departure. He was only a poor fellow crossed in love, from whom nothing, save selfishness, could be expected, and yet with whom they had a fellow-feeling.

It was on Mary, as a proud, saucy, hardened, fine lady, who would not even take the trouble to know her own mind, that the vials of the people's wrath were poured forth. Of course there was no overt act of hostility, and yet the sense of hostility was forced on her.

Kit Must told her with a sardonic grin—since Kit never forgave her for being a woman placed over him, though he was faithful to her interests—that though the village people were poorly off this season, with half of their bread-winners dispersed in search of employment at a distance, he had never had such difficulty in getting day's-men or women for farm work.

‘I dunno what has come over them,’ he said. ‘I ’ave seen, when them there were on full time, that they were ready and willing to be engaged at the farm ; but now things are clean altered. Seems they would turn their hands to any queer job, and half starve, sooner than give us a turn. There be bad blood among them where we are concerned, Miss. Lord, when that ass Amos,’ naming a servant under him, ‘let the horses fall coming down Church Hill with the cart load of Regents t’other day, though it were at the end of the village, ne’er a soul lent a hand. Beasts had to lie and kick up their heels, with the risk of breaking their legs, not to say the cart, to mossels, and Amos, the blockhead, had to holler and run half-way to the offices for help. I call that war declared, whatever may be the reason ; mebbe you, as has book larnin’, can explain it.’

The disagreeable truth came under Mary’s immediate notice. One of her maids left, as, under the auspices of Mrs. Must, they were disagreeably

given to leave, and her successor was not to be found in the village.

The women among Mary's neighbours even went so far as to speak at her when she passed them standing gossiping in their door-ways. She caught fragments of conversation uttered in a loud key, and undoubtedly meant to reach her ear, containing allusions to 'fine folk as had come where they were not wanted, and might have stayed away—and no loss, among their own kind they thought so much on;' to 'beauty as was skin deep,' and 'pride that comes afore a fall;' all of which random hits caused Mary's feet to hurry and her face to burn. In happier circumstances she might not have minded being unjustly censured by her humbler public; she might have laughed a little at the irrelevance of the censure; she might have promised to herself securely that she would prove its injustice; she might even have been appeased by the blind loyalty evinced towards the Czar. But as it was, the injury rankled in her heart.

One of the maid-servants at Sandford farm fell ill. She was from the village after all. She had come and gone, and, smitten by some sense of injury inflicted on her mistress, had volunteered to return, not without an ostentatious show of her fidelity in difficulties. 'I cannot send her home again,' Mary had argued with Mrs. Must, 'not even if it prove an infectious disease, as you seem

to fear. I am not aware there is anything of the kind in the village, and she is one of a large family, that she would return to infect without fail. We have much more space and power of using effectual precautions here.'

'Well, Miss,' said Mrs. Must, meekly, 'you and Mrs. Penfeather will do what you think is best. It is for you to judge in course; and for the sake of the family I shall stay and run the risk till it is found out what the disease is. But if so be it is fever, then I have my dooty to Christopher. I have always known that my poor heart as is weak will not stand no fevers or infectious diseases. If Becky stay in fever, then, Miss Carteret, I am sorry, but I must do my dooty; I must go.'

'Well, you must go then, Mrs. Must,' said Mary, with decision.

When the illness turned out fever—one of those slow, undefined fevers which are generally only infectious in proportion to poverty of diet and absence of accommodation—Mary adhered to her resolution that the girl should be kept and nursed at Sandford.

'She left the village and braved the objections of her neighbours—even her family's dissuasion, I understand—to come to us,' maintained Mary, in answer to Mrs. Penfeather's scruples; 'we cannot send her away in her need. Besides, there would certainly be more of this fever, and the people might say that I had brought it upon them.'

‘There will very likely be more of the fever whether Becky go home or not,’ said Mrs. Penfeather. ‘I think that you are letting yourself dwell on a foolish, passing prejudice, and putting far too much weight on it, until you yourself are in danger of being carried away by it. We too must think of our “dooty,” though I trust in a more enlarged sense than Mrs. Must thinks of hers. Would your father and mother choose you to have a case of fever here? The doctor says the girl can still be removed with safety to herself. I see no objection to her being taken away—if not to her father’s crowded house, to some hospital—is there none within a reasonable distance?’

‘There is a cottage hospital which mamma helped to get up, and which she visited once a week, in our village. But there are forms to be gone through before a patient can be admitted; and English country girls like Becky have a strong dislike to going into an hospital. I am sure neither papa nor mamma have any great dread of infection.’

In spite of her remonstrance, Mrs. Penfeather, who had come from a country where fever raged perennially and cholera was a regular visitant, and who had been in tribulation to which a case of even the most infectious and dangerous illness in a house, was a trifle light as air, did not regard the question of Becky’s going or staying as one of vital importance. She allowed herself to be persuaded that Mary was in the right,

the more easily that she (Mrs. Penfeather) made up her mind to instal herself in the post of head-nurse, and to hold Mary at a respectful distance.

The first little shock given to the arrangement came in Kit Must's somewhat sheepish announcement that he should have to go with his old lady. 'Bless you, I don't mind fayver a bit,' he said, with a face that carried conviction, 'but she do; she'll not rest easy unless I go with her. She has a fear of me being took and lost to her like father and the others. She can't be put about; it don't agree with her; it never a' done; it's as if she were made of finer stuff than the rest of us rough mortals. I'll attend to everything outside as usual. I'll come to the door on the sly to see how you are a gettin' on, or if you want any thing suddent. But I can't bide in the house to have owd mother worrited into fits.'

Kit's desertion left the house in the forlornness to which the absence of a man, where one has been accustomed to preside, whether as master or servant, condemns a family of unprotected females. Afterwards Becky grew a great deal worse than had been anticipated, and hovered between life and death; while her fellow-servant, a tender-hearted, weak-minded woman, in a mixture of grief and terror at the state of her companion, the departure of Kit Must, and the villagers standing more aloof than ever, went into a chronic condition of tears and 'twitters,' which, to say the least,

was not inspiriting. Mary and Mrs. Penfeather, like braver, wiser women, rose to the occasion, and were busy and hopeful to the extent of making merry over their troubles at times. But the latter felt—and it was what she never expected to feel again—as if the two were in a beleaguered fort. And she dreaded with reason the varied and long protracted strain on Mary's strength and spirits.

The first lightening of the load—and it happened on the day when the earliest snow fell that winter—came in the shape of a flag of truce from the village. The herald was a woman, who was known by report to Mary and Mrs. Penfeather as the loudest-tongued, most drunken randy in the place. The messenger delivered a singular oration to the effect that, as Mary and Mrs. Penfeather had not acted 'oonladylike by Becky Morris, so Sally Oates would not see them put upon, and had come over to lend them a hand.' The 'hand' was valuable so far, and therefore made welcome as a token of returning sense and amity in the village, and as affording a wonderful solace and encouragement to Betty's dejected and cowed fellow-servant; otherwise it was not of much use, since poor Sally was neither trustworthy nor capable, except with her tongue.

But another week had greater cheer in store for the little party at Sandford. Becky was pronounced out of danger, and Mary was conscious of such a burden lifted off her shoulders, that she

felt at liberty to own to herself she was rather weary in her thankfulness, and to know that deep down at the very bottom her heart had its own bitterness.

She was sitting a little listlessly—blaming herself for the listlessness—by the fire that was acceptable in the black frost which had succeeded the early sprinkling of snow, when a man's shadow crossed the window. Mary was expecting the doctor, and so did not start up in a tremor, partly caused by the fact that she was living in a house for the present forbidden to visitors. Yet she knew, as if by inspiration, the instant the door was open, and before she had done more than catch a glimpse of a portly figure enveloped in wraps, that her father was come.

‘Papa, papa! you are here at last. I have been expecting you every day for the past fortnight, though I never said so to Mrs. Penfeather,’ she cried breathlessly, as she sprang up to meet him, and took eager hold of him to feel that he was substantial flesh and blood, not a phantom of the imagination, such as had been persistently haunting Becky upstairs during the last few weeks. To make assurance doubly sure, Mary pressed her warm cheek against Mr. Carteret’s cold one.

‘So you expected me, Molly, eh? How was that when you had no notice of my coming?’ said her father, clasping her close, while all the alienation between them melted as by a sunbeam,

and they were friends again, as they had been, until Taff Penryn had come between them a year ago.

‘I cannot tell you why I expected you,’ said Mary, with a happy laugh, ‘unless that I have been so used to look for you to come to my aid in every difficulty. But you did not know that there was a difficulty. I took care not to enter into the details of Becky’s illness in my letters home. Oh, papa,’ Mary broke off anxiously, ‘what a distance for you to come in the depth of winter! And ought you to be here, fresh from another country, while there is any kind of fever in the house?’

‘I should think so, if you and Mrs. Penfeather are here. Why, Mary, how long is it since you have begun to turn the tables on me—to take care of me, instead of me taking care of you, as you hinted at a little ago, and to shelve me in the light of an old fellow in his dotage? I have come to call you and Mrs. Penfeather to account, to get you out of just such a quixotic scrape as I might have expected from two women, and as your mother might have fallen into.’

‘But what could we do, papa?’ urged Mary, wincing and colouring a little, though she smiled still, under a consciousness of self-will and recklessness. ‘We could not send the girl back to the village to infect her whole kith and kin; you see she has infected nobody here. I think she has

been tolerably well taken care of; the doctor has been satisfied with our nursing,' finished Mary, with a little complacency.

'Hum, I am inclined to think there would have been even less risk run, and that the girl would have been still better taken care of in the cottage hospital.'

'There were forms to be gone through, papa, which would have occasioned delay; and girls like Becky shrink from hospitals.'

'If the forms could not be managed in a couple of hours, they are most tyrannical, absurd forms, which require to be seen to and done away with; and a girl like Becky—any kind of girl can be taught what is for her good, if she is ignorant of it. At the worst, there are such things as nurses in connection with the hospital, one of whom could have been brought here if necessary. No, no, my dear; say that you were in a little fever yourself, of magnanimity and what not, which disposes to mock heroism, and tempts men and women to court danger.'

'But I assure you we did not court danger,' said Mary, earnestly; 'we took every precaution.'

'No doubt, you locked the stable after the steed was stolen. I was going to add that Mrs. Penfeather did not know how the land lay, and is a woman like yourself. But I warn you I am come to put a stop to all this nonsense, to carry you off with me, and to reinstate that cool duffer

Kit Must on the premises. If he or his precious mother catch fever after all, I suppose they must nurse each other.'

'Papa,' said Mary, 'I think you are wrong; but I do not feel so well up to argument as I used to do, and I shall not be sorry to go with you anywhere, till I am stronger again.'

Mr. Carteret let fall during dinner that Mrs. Penfeather had written to him, deploring her inefficiency as a guardian, and making him acquainted with the state of matters.

'You have always been very good to me, dear Mrs. Penfeather'—Mary contradicted the first statement—'and my only regret at leaving Sandford is that I cannot take you with me.'

CHAPTER LV.

BACK IN DRESDEN.—A COMPANION FOR BARONESS
GISELA AND AN ENGLISH TEACHER UNDER PROTEST.

MARY was once more in the Bürgerwiese. On the evening that she and her father arrived, her mother did more than receive her affectionately. Mrs. Carteret gazed wistfully in her daughter's face to read its signs. But when Mary declared herself quite well, rather refreshed than fatigued by the long cold journey—which to be sure Mr. Carteret had conducted carefully and deliberately—when she put a heroic force upon herself to appear mistress of the situation, composed, cheerful, and ready to be interested in all that had passed in her absence, Mary's mother turned away with a little baffled resentful air, and gave herself up to attentions to her husband. She had missed him very much. She was eager to resume the walks and the games of chess which they had lately inaugurated. Oh! and she had been reading a book with which he had been occupied, and wished to ask him some questions about it.

Mr. Carteret looked glad to be at home again,

and was surprised and touched by his wife's effusiveness, which was rare in her. He was pleased, too, with her reading the book he had been full of, and seeking to talk it over. She was not a silly though she had been a narrow-minded woman, and her remarks were always pertinent and suggestive to him.

'Papa and mamma are getting a regular old Darby and Joan,' said Mary to herself, with a smile and a sigh. 'I don't think I can have been so much missed as I was conceited enough to fancy. Perhaps papa no longer wants a private secretary; and I shall be rather in the way.'

Fra had been out at the opera, and walked into the *salon*, with the scarlet hood which became her so well still covering the coral in her hair, and with the fur-lined cloak over the *demi-toilette* of an evening at home or at the opera—which was the next thing to home to the population of Dresden.

'Papa come back,' she exclaimed lightly, kissing her father as lightly. 'You there, Mary,' she said, with another slight but colder kiss, like a pledge of bare amity. 'It is as well that you have returned. It is sometimes stupid going to places by myself, and one cannot always have Baroness Gisela, as I had her to-night.'

To be one too many in her father and mother's *tête-à-tête*; to serve as another convenience and foil to Fra, was not a very joyous prospect.

It was strange to find herself in her little room again, with the bare boards, the undraped bed, the convenient cupboards, and the birdcage—empty now, to which she had come so light-heartedly, and where she had been so sad and so glad. Mary could sit down, close her eyes and ears and see and hear the old world around her by means of her inner consciousness. There were the sculptured groups, the flights of stairs, the broad promenade of the Brühl Terrace at the height of its popularity, when the frozen Elbe was a rough high way. The Künstler-verein of Saxon artists was entered from the Brühl Terrace. Mary recalled, in opposition to the scene without, a strange picture she had seen in it, which was in some harmony with her thoughts to-night. The name was, 'For Ever Accursed : a Group from the Nether World.' In it stood a despairing woman, white as her gown—the very roses in her hair blanched. A little apart from her was a man, with broad-leafed hat and drooping feather, and who sat with his elbows on his knees, his head resting on his hand.

There was the Hof Brücke, with its distant view of the Saxon mountains—no longer blue, but glittering white in the winter sunshine, and its near view of Palast and Kirche.

The grey and white pigeons and the russet sparrows perched demurely and pertly as ever on the stone head of Fritz August.

The Altenburger peasants in their short full

skirts, with the black ribands streaming from their caps, threaded their way among the market people still. The red and blue-liveried drivers of droschies cracked their whips. The troops of soldiers marched and countermarched. Over in the Zwinger the faces of the immortals—virgins and saints—looked down unmoved on the homely rout.

In shop and on pavement, and at genial suppertables, sounded the friendly ‘*Gott Gruss dich,*’ ‘*Adé,*’ and ‘*Gesegnete Mahlzeit.*’ The Hof Theatre rang and echoed with the overtures of operas and the speeches of stage heroes.

Mary did not fear to venture out. She was tolerably sure that Taff Penryn would not frequent a pension or have rooms in Dresden this season, and that neither would the Mad Graf be the fashion this year. For anything farther she must make up her mind to bear it. In this, as in so many trials, it is the first step which costs.

When the winter gaiety was at its height Mary’s re-appearance, with her intended marriage broken off, could not, in spite of the lustre with which the Mad Graf had managed to invest her for a time, create so much as a nine days’ wonder in these circles—which the Dresden newspaper, following the example of greater chronicles, called the first and best.

In lower and more purely German sets there is great odium attached to the young man or the young woman who has been concerned in a

broken-off engagement, unless, indeed, the culprit can prove himself or herself a victim. In addition to this censure, which Mary had often voted righteous, there was the natural, and in a measure patriotic, animus sure to be felt by Taff Penryn's associates against the English girl who had thrown over their comrade and robbed him of what his adopted countrymen had come to regard as his due in the fortune with the possession of which she was accredited. Mary, who thought she could face every other grievance patiently, considering how little it was in comparison with what she had lost, lived in constant dread of any chance encounter with the familiar faces of the Gottes-segen because of the cloud of unconditional resentment they must bear. She had not been guilty of nervously conjuring up terrors which had no existence. The reality outdid the apprehension. Every face she had honoured and esteemed lowered upon her. Herr Mönch strode past her with a silent greeting, as if he no longer held her worthy to take the names of Bruss and Wallaice within her lips. Kunigunde even—Kunigunde Jacobi—at whose marriage Mary had assisted, crossed the street and made as if she did not see Mary, because she would not so much as look upon, if she could help it, the girl who had behaved abominably to ‘*Er Kann Alles.*’

Mary being a woman of spirit, could not sit down quietly under this sweeping condemnation.

She had done no greater wrong than Taff Penryn had committed ; they had both been mistaken first and last.

Mary marched right into the enemy's stronghold. She called for Fräulein Körner, determined, if the Fräulein referred to the obnoxious subject, or treated her as the others did, to appeal to her generosity and justice to believe that Mary had been as much sinned against as sinning.

But the Fräulein gave Mary no opportunity of defending herself. The elder woman was, as she would have said, tamed and forced to be charitable by age and experience. '*Ach nein!*' She could not fly out against Mary with the hot wrath which would hear of no extenuating circumstances, as she might have behaved in her frank fearless youth. She loved '*Er Kann Alles,*' but she had also conceived a warm friendship for Miss Carteret ; and she believed she knew better and could make greater allowance for English people—with their strange reserves, their forms, their pride, and their peevishness—than could most of her compatriots.

Fräulein Körner received Mary much as usual, save for the flurry with which the good old lady had to contend lest any of her '*family*' should come in and not conduct themselves with the forbearance she could have wished. She veiled her flurry by an account of a '*trauen Fall*' that had happened to her in the death of one of her few remaining relations, which had put a stop

to a little musical party she had been about to give for the benefit of her friends, and of some 'new English knowledges' she had acquired in Dresden.

The speaker's English had got hopelessly warped and confused, and it was only by an exercise of native talent that Mary hit upon the French word '*connaissances*' as an explanation of the Fräulein's 'English knowledges.'

The Fräulein talked on with simple unaffected sorrow of her kinswoman, who had been an invalid for some time, but the Fräulein had thought she might live a little longer, and would fain have kept her still. At the same time she returned with naïve regret to the failure of her party, which everyone invited must have enjoyed. She had arranged it all so nicely. A *meister der capelle*—the first *meister* in Dresden—had agreed to come and play in the quartette. It would have gone off so well—she was sure all would have thought so—if the sad news had not arrived and stopped everything. No, it was not to be—so many things that seemed so excellent were not to be; but the good God must know best. With this single mild allusion, the interview terminated.

As Mary's vigour of mind and body returned, the old longing for work—real hard work, which should engross and exhaust her energies and yield an unmistakable return, though it were work like in degree to that which occupied the amazons

in the Grosse and Japanese Palace gardens—seized her afresh.

In lieu of it Mary turned again to the delicate and elaborate embroidery, which had been one of her resources when Mrs. Penfeather was introduced to her, and had augured well of her from that among other signs. The worst of it was that such air-drawn work was best suited for the light-hearted, and that Mary was apt to be reminded by it of a curious work of art which is preserved among the treasures in the Green Vaults—a basket covered with varnished bread-crumbs, arranged in the most exquisite and intricate patterns, and labelled, ‘The work of a lady.’

But Mrs. Carteret was pleased by Mary’s skill in embroidery—a skill derived from her mother—and the mother and daughter fraternised over ‘designs’ and stitches. Mary found there was still a corner for her at her father’s writing-table, when his last German translation was to be revised, just as there would be a seat for her in that *Kinderstube* at Schloss Rudener, over the preparation of which Lyd was writing in such blissful hope.

The spring was at hand ; the frost bonds and chains which had been hugged and made the best of in their season were crashing and bursting on all sides ; the first of the undulating timber serpents which form the fleets of rafts, had been steered down the open Elbe ; the hyacinths which

make gay the gardens of the Bürgerwiese were already above the ground.

Madame Marck, whose health had been failing, and whose infirmities were beginning to make a prisoner of her, desired to engage a companion for Baroness Gisela, in order that her sacred rank might not be exposed unguarded to profane associations.

Being of a far-sighted and economical cast of mind, Madame Marck had farther decided that the companion ought to be English, in order that two dogs might be killed with one stone. Gisela should have a duenna hired to be stationary by her side, and at the same time she should secure the opportunity of improving her English conversation, which not even her English sister-in-law had brought to perfection.

Mary Carteret had readily agreed to pass her judgment on the applicant for the situation, and had gone, at Madame Marck's request, to the school which was recommending the governess.

The young lady was not free for some time after Mary had been shown into the *salon*. The mistress of the establishment was also engaged. Mary was left to amuse herself with the musical instruments and the specimens of painting, which diversified the usual bright emptiness of a German drawing-room. The father of some pupil had waited there before Mary, and had left traces of his presence in crumpled-up copies of 'Klattera-

datsch'—that German 'Punch'—and other newspapers, littering the velvet couch of honour. Mary took them as her prey. She read in the first a poem on the insolent arrogance of Herr John Bull, in which he was made to explain his non-intervention in foreign politics, and to express his confidence in himself and contempt for the rest of the world by the frequent utterance of an expletive, not fit for ears reverent or polite, but still supposed by foreigners to be a distinguishing adjunct of his speech.

In the second she found the notification of the death of Jenny Theckla von Rheinau, born Von Ladiswitz, and who was summed up conclusively by her mourning husband, father, mother, father-in-law, mother-in-law, brothers, and sisters as a good wife, daughter, daughter-in-law, and sister, in the announcement which requested the sympathy of her circle of friends.

Mary read the straightforward 'I wish a respectable experienced housemaid, with good references,' signed in full, 'Frau Dr. Pause.' She studied the usual warnings against roads through private grounds being taken advantage of by an intruding public, the usual advertisements for missing medallions and lost canaries. When she had reached the last the door opened, and Alice Honeywood walked into the room.

The surprise and momentary awkwardness were mutual. Alice recovered herself first. 'My dear

Miss Carteret, I was coming to see you the first thing after I was settled. I heard from old Anne Sole—our cook, you remember—that you had left Sandford not long after we quitted it, and returned to Dresden. Yes, I have come abroad like the rest of the world, and as I don't care for hotels and boarding-houses—indeed, I don't think they are very suitable for a young lady who is alone—and as I wish to get thoroughly behind the scenes, I have thought of being a companion this year, for the convenience and the fun of the thing. But I had no idea that I should have the pleasure of coming across you. Can the young lady for whom I am wanted be any connection of my old school-fellow? Madame mentioned no name, she only said a young baroness—I was particular about the rank, of course—and that my duties were to be limited to speaking English, and to going with the young lady into company.'

The fact was, that Alice's friends had not been so solicitous for her society as she had expected. The tradesman uncle had not relished her return upon his family any more than she had enjoyed the change, and both had come to the conclusion she ought to do something for herself at once. 'If I must be a governess I had better be one abroad, where no one will hear of it,' Alice had determined; 'at least I shall be seeing the world, and I shall be able to speak of places with which everybody is familiar now-a-days, while nobody

need know in what capacity I became familiar with them.' Afterwards, when Alice had found an opportunity of coming to Dresden, she had said to herself, 'I need not mind though the Carterets are there, for they are regular absentees, and they might be useful to me. Mary might be friendly—I should not be so lonely in her neighbourhood.'

Mary was charitable to Alice's affectation, and was anxious to be of service to her. It was a comfort to Mary to reflect on all Alice's excellent qualifications for a companion, in her good humour, her cheerfulness, and her tact. On the other hand, Gisela would not tax her severely, while, for anything else, Gisela, who was the finer character of the two, and who had the advantage of the rank which the little Baroness never forgot, might do Alice good in more ways than one. Even the shock of finding a young baroness a simple, shy girl, with a bad squint, and infinitely worse dressed than herself, ought to be of service to Alice. Mary was happy to say to Alice that she was delighted with the coincidence; she thought that she could arrange everything for her. She trusted Alice would find it pleasant, and it would be a boon to herself, since they would be near neighbours. Yes, Baroness Gisela was a connection if not a relative.

In the meantime Mary was resolving to impress upon Madame Marck—she had less fear

for Gisela's civility not being equal to the occasion—that it was an English friend of her own who was consenting to act as companion to Baroness Gisela.

In the middle of the cordiality which was equally sincere on Alice's part, the moment she found altered circumstances made no difference to Mary Carteret, and that she was going to be friendly and to stand by her, there was still a little hesitation on both sides.

Mary felt that she ought, but did not know how, to enquire after the Czar's welfare.

Alice was debating within herself whether she should keep back some information concerning him. But Mary was so kind, and she might hear of it elsewhere without the fine point that Alice was prepared to put upon it. Altogether Alice made up her mind to make a clean breast of it.

‘When I said I was alone, Miss Carteret, I did not mean that the Czar was so far off as England. No, he is abroad, also; in fact, he is in Dresden like myself; you may meet him in the street any day. He did not mean to come here exactly. What induced him to go abroad at all was that he found, on applying for a professorship of chemistry, or some position of that kind, that great weight was put on an acquaintance with foreign chemistry—I mean on having been engaged for a time under some famous foreign chemist. So he made up his mind

—you know how brisk and resolved the Czar is—on giving himself this advantage. He has been to several German works, and has heard of openings where no doubt he would be very welcome; but there are always obstacles and delays. He is kept hanging on, and you can guess how he hates being idle. He has joined me here; and just as I have done about being a companion, he has undertaken to teach English in a boarding school till the chemists are ready for him. Is it not odd and absurd?’

‘Not so very odd,’ answered Mary, steadily, looking away from the flushed, eager face, while racking her brains to say something which might be balm to Alice’s sisterly pride; ‘we have plenty of University men teaching English and other branches of education in Germany. Why, Louis Philippe taught languages in Switzerland while the throne of France was being vacated for him.’

CHAPTER LVI.

FRA'S FOLLY.

By the time Mary met the Czar he had digested the cut she had given to his vanity ; he had even begun to wonder ‘how could I be such a fool as to be so down in the mouth about it? I never really cared for her in that way, though I still think she is a brick of a girl. But what says the old song?—

If she be not so to me,
What care I how good she be?

I was a conceited idiot to suppose the whole neighbourhood would be talking of the set-down she gave me. I don't imagine they so much as stopped to say “serve him right.” And what if they had? it would have broken no bones. At the same time, I am glad I threw up the works, and did not wait till they threw up me. These city men at the head of affairs were too near skin-flints in their dealings with me to give me a chance. I was not at liberty to make a hit. It was sheer waste of time as

well as of a fellow's brains. Now I will take the first opportunity of learning as much as I can from the German chemists—squeezing them dry, as far as I am concerned, and then go home and be prepared to act on the knowledge. I shall actually have got a "rise" out of my friend Miss Carteret's rejection'—a conclusion of the whole matter which tickled and pleased the Czar immensely.

'Isn't it a good idea, my taking a spell at teaching?'—he attacked the subject manfully when they did meet. 'Can you fancy me an usher?—an honest shift, eh? It was well for me that Uncle Jim kept me at an old grammar school, and did not confine me to a commercial education, so that I got a classical foundation to my English, and am able to impart it on the best models. It would not have done to let the funds run too low while I was waiting for a chemical berth; and of course I was not going to touch a farthing of Alice's earnings. Ain't it clever of her to get herself so soon and so well installed? I believe she has to thank you too, since the young lady is some friend of yours.'

'She has to thank me for very little,' said Mary; 'her own capability, like your energy, can do without support. I need not tell you that papa will be very glad to see you, Mr. Honeywood.'

Mr. Carteret, in his own exile and fallen fortunes, was ready enough to be hospitable to

the young man who was making the best of his reverse, and who had been when at Sandford a sort of tenant of the squire's.

Even Fra, to Mary's surprise, welcomed her undervalued schoolfellow Alice, in a subordinate situation. There was the usual spring lull in the Dresden gaiety; and Fra, with nothing better to do, rather enjoyed comparing old notes, and showing off her own belleship and general acquisitions in social importance, to her former acquaintance.

Mary had meant to be kind to Alice; but Fra, in her condescension, with her big talk of court balls and royal sledge parties, her lively enumerations of the dignities of princes and princesses, Grafen and Gräfinnen, including the pleasantness of her sworn servants, the Light Blues, who, like pawns among chesspieces, filled up the blanks on the board, had more attraction for Alice. Mary had to stand aside and to see her friendliness forestalled by Fra's patronage, which was accepted with eager willingness, until Alice became smilingly subservient to Fra, and was at her beck and call for her ideas no less than her behaviour in a new world.

That was nothing; the Czar shared the same fate. Nay, Mary would have been thankful if the relation had stopped there.

Mary had entertained correspondingly good intentions with regard to Peter Honeywood. She

had been anxious to show that she prized the spirit and sense which condoned the peremptoriness of her refusal—to prove that she had remembered the services he had done for her and Mrs. Penfeather, and that she could be his true friend though she had refused, with something like scorn, to become his wife.

But here Mary was again superseded. Fra, in her greed of men's admiration, at once spread her net for the Czar—far below her as she held him in the social scale, and this time she caught her bird, and entangled him helplessly in her meshes.

The man had never been able to regard Mary as other than a fine woman at some distance from him. He might bridge the distance by an effort for expediency's sake, but even if it were bridged it would always remain in the intercourse. But he was first dazzled by Fra's prettiness and brilliance, and then smitten to the heart by her capricious kindness alternating with her coquettish coldness.

The Czar had such a genuine English straightforwardness and awkward force about his feelings, when they were fully aroused, in spite of all that Alice had done to cure him of this rustic vehemence and directness, that the dangerous climax to which his affections were tending, was, in what would sound an incredible short space of time, plainly enough visible.

Alice had no longer any need of the promptings of her jealous imagination to conjure up a mistress for the Czar, and yet the date of the Honeywoods' establishment in Dresden, and of their appearance in the Bürgerwiese, did not reach a month back. Hardly more than fourteen days had elapsed when the Czar was making the most frantic excuses for bestowing all his spare time on the Carterets, when his eyes devoured Fra, his face burned hotly as his fingers touched hers.

A passion had laid hold on the young man, violent in proportion as it had paralysed his common sense, since there was absolutely not the most distant prospect of success for him in his present aspirations. He must be content to grovel abjectly at Fra's feet as her hopeless lover. She was not even like Mary. He could never, in his right mind, pretend, after any lapse of time, to make this haughty, pleasure-loving, worldly-minded girl—whose constant boast was of her aristocratic associations—his wife.

Mary looked on, in as far as she was concerned, with the utmost dismay. Surely Fra would not be so barbarous as to permit the sacrifice of a man's best love for her lightest amusement and the sheer craving of her egotism?

If Fra had not mercy, Mary had no hope of any effectual interference. Fra was too skilful a flirt not to contrive that the Czar's homage should be paid to her without attracting undue attention.

Besides, Mrs. Carteret was absent with Lyd in the Tannenthal; and Mr. Carteret made no bones of withdrawing himself from those singers' contests in which Fra and her musical guests were prone to engage.

Alice was musical too, but she was in Madame Marck's house, next door; and although she might be on the *qui vive* by a subtle power of detecting the presence of her beloved brother through the intervening walls, she was left writhing in her incapacity to make her body follow her mind. She had ceased to be her own mistress, and even if she were free, she had a despairing perception that she was no match for the triumphant Fra. When Alice was with the little group in the Carterets' drawing-room her music was not wanted to make a trio—duets were the order of the day. Fra had the enslaved Czar all to herself in these old English bursts of love-fire and pathos—those melodies of Moore's, in which

There's nothing half so sweet in life
As love's young dream.

And,

One minute's dream about thee
Were worth a long, an endless year
Of waking bliss without thee,
My own love, my only dear.

which the enchantress had been recently cultivating. Not only Mary, but Alice had to look on in dumb distress; to tell herself, if it were fated

the Czar was to be caught by any of the Carterets, Mary would have been a thousand times to be preferred. Fra would play with him, mock him, and cast him adrift when it suited her.

The last might have suited Alice too, if she had not loved her brother honestly enough in the middle of her selfish considerations, to be fit to break her heart should he but scratch his little finger. And as for the remotest likelihood of her office as the Czar's future housekeeper being snatched from her, Alice could contemplate the possibility of that loss with greater equanimity at the present time than she had ever been able to do before. A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush. It was one thing to be in possession of the office and another to be reduced to regard it as a doubtful possibility in the remote distance. Alice found being a companion not so bad an experience as it had been called; and, on the other hand, the Czar might not again, for an indefinite period, have a house to keep. Why should Alice endanger what she had secured in the present for a hope in the uncertain future? Alice was still inclined to claim jealously her portion in her brother; but in one sense he was not so great a prize in her eyes as he had been when he was manager of the Sandford chemical works and master of the cottage. She could bear to see his life passing from her grasp with more coolness, even while she fretted for his

own sake over his being made a fool of by Fra Carteret.

When Mary had looked on in consternation at the part which the Czar was playing, and felt that she could have found it in her heart to warn the moth from the flame—but, alas! she knew that the moth would never have believed her—she turned to watch curiously Fra's conduct. Mary had at first entertained no fear for Fra's feelings any more than for her ultimate discretion.

It came on the elder sister with bewilderment and relenting to discover that Fra had a heart, and that it was actually slipping from her in the wild game on which she had entered from the lowest motives. The signs were unmistakable. Fra was an arch coquette, but she would not mimic the symptoms of sensations that encumbered her in her part, and which she would far rather have dispensed with. She did not feign the sudden bungling and shyness which interfered with what she was doing, and were utterly unnatural to her; the blushes that were far too burning to be pleasant, and which responded, with a vexatious appropriateness that threatened to leave her no longer mistress of the situation, to another person's blushes; the fits of causeless crossness, the inequality of spirits, not of temper, quite as foreign to Fra.

Mary would have thought, on the surface of the connection, that Peter Honeywood, only tolerably handsome, and just saved from being insigni-

ficant in his under size by the amount of energy he threw into his individuality, with his rustic flavour, and, without a single extraneous advantage, must have been altogether distasteful to Fra. But, in the first place, no man who would look twice at her was distasteful to Fra ; in the second, the Czar had sundry attractions of freshness, manliness, and vigour, which no woman, however worldly, whom he might love, could help weighing in the balance.

Mary remembered what Fra had said, when she had been betrayed into a lamentation over Lyd's departure. Here was another person who believed in her, foolishly, dotingly, in the height of his passion. But still it was the faith which Fra had coveted, and had been little capable, with all her gifts, of inspiring. Probably this was only the second instance in her life in which it had been lavishly bestowed. In the middle of her popularity, at the Gräfin von Hersfeld's and elsewhere, Fra was generally seen through, and she was sufficiently sharp to be aware of it. But here was a man who could not find a flaw in her, who could conceive her capable of all unselfishness and unworldliness. And who shall say what peculiar fascination existed for the selfish and worldly woman, in that very conviction of her faultlessness, in one poor fellow's eyes ?

How would it end ? Mary asked herself, and her own eyes grew dim with eagerness and yearn-

ing. Would Fra awaken as Lyd had awakened, and in still more unpropitious circumstances? But Fra had such an indomitable spirit, and was so enterprising and energetic, like her lover, that if she cared to do it, she could cope with any circumstances. Would her better soul be revealed at last, be aroused to do battle and to win the victory?

Mary never forgot the various incidents of the crisis. Fra came in one day excited with the news that the Gräfin von Hersfeld had heard of the intended visit of some distinguished friends, in whose honour she was to give a series of entertainments, for which she had already engaged Fra as an able coadjutor. There were to be tableaux, dances, and excursions, all crowded into one brief week. 'I shall be so much engaged,' announced Fra, 'that I'll not be able to call my head my own.'

'Then you will have to intermit your musical practisings,' said Mary, for she had heard Fra arrange with the Czar the songs they were to go through in order together.

'Of course these will have to be laid aside,' said Fra, coldly, 'and high time too; they were only an interlude for a dull season. I have something better to do in general than stay at home and sing with any young man.'

Before the Czar turned up again and was made acquainted with the kind of entertainment to which he had been contributing, Gisela, with

Alice Honeywood, called one day, bringing the Mad Graf in their train, to the great satisfaction, though it differed in kind, of both the ladies. He had arrived in Dresden the night before, had gone straightway to his cousin, and come next in her company to the Carterets.

At the same time, the Graf was less particular in his attentions and in his manner generally than he had formerly been. He looked and behaved more like other people than Mary had ever seen him do. It might have been because his long, yellow hair had undergone a clipping; but Mary hoped that the change in his demeanour had some connection with what Gisela was in haste to refer to.

He had been living at Felsberg throughout the winter. During the breaking up of the frost in the spring, severe floods had occurred in the neighbouring river, full of danger to the lives and property of the villagers. The Graf had gone to their assistance, and laboured not only at the time, but during the succeeding weeks to repair the damage.

Gisela's repressed enthusiasm, together with the Graf's disclaimers, convinced Mary that her knight errant had done his duty, when so congenial an opportunity for doing it had presented itself. She conjectured, also, that in the course of the performance he might have hammered out the valuable discovery that there were other, and on the whole

more satisfactory ways of distinguishing himself and vindicating his claims to nobility and social importance than by the follies in which he had indulged.

Certainly he was subdued and even polite. While he had paid one of his first visits to the Carterets, instead of directing his whole clumsy regard to Mary, although he must have heard that she was free again, he consented to sit by Fra, did his best to converse with her, and even testified considerable interest in her accounts of the Gräfin von Hersfeld's hospitable intentions.

Fra's eyes flashed. Was her reward coming at last? All day after the visit she was in exultant spirits.

In the evening the Czar came. He had the roll of music in his hand which Fra had given him to try over before practising it with her. She was unwontedly busy about a piece of needlework. As a rule Fra despised all needlework, except what was demanded from her by the exigencies of her wardrobe, in relation to the small allowance of pocket money which her father could give her. To hear Fra's supercilious contempt for the most delicate achievements, no less than the grossest failures in 'fancy work,' one might well have argued that she had a soul above trifles.

But this evening she was bending as assiduously over some braiding as Mary might have done. 'Are you too much occupied, Miss Frances, to have

leisure for our duet to-night?' Honeywood asked, with soft reproach thrilling in his tones, rising and coming towards her, after looking at her with a disturbed air and waiting in vain for her summons. 'Have you forgotten that we were to sing to-night?' he said again, hanging tremblingly upon her answer.

Fra paused in her work, and looked up at him with eyes which wavered a little, with an uneasy, annoyed heightening of her bright colour, and a stirring of her small hands and feet as she twisted about the cashmere and braid, and pushed aside her foot-stool. But she spoke with perfect suavity—only a little chill in its unmoved fluency. 'I have not forgotten, Mr. Honeywood, but I am finishing a cushion for my friend the Gräfin von Hersfeld, and I have promised my company to her for the whole of next week. Probably I shall go with her to the country the week following. I don't know that there is any use in our continuing our practice. It has been very pleasant and improving. I am sure my voice has gained from your accompaniment, but it must have come to an end, like all pleasant things, sooner or later, must it not?' He stood dumbfounded; and then lest he should rebel and prove troublesome, even dangerous to her prospects, she put the finishing touch to his downfall. 'Indeed, I am beginning to be afraid that we have been giving up too much time to our music,' she said with an attempt at ease and gaiety,

to which her changing colour and flickering eyelids gave the lie, only her lips did not falter. 'I am rather an important little person in Dresden society, you must know. I have to represent the family, since Mary goes in for laziness, domesticity, and all the humdrum virtues. I have ever so many demands on my notice which I ought to attend to. And you, do you not have piles of class papers to correct at night, such as my old master had to carry off in the afternoon and bring back with him next morning?'

It was quite within the bounds of possibility that Fra might have reminded the Czar of his usher's duties in all kindness and respect for the man, but there are ways and ways of reminding.

At her tone he first flushed scarlet and then grew pale. He drew back from her, as if he had received a blow, and then went and sat down and interchanged a random word with Mary, who had been a pained and shamed witness of what had passed. In a few minutes, making a slight excuse, he took his leave without letting his eyes fall again on Fra.

Fra rose deliberately, walked to the window, and looked after him. When she turned round, her face was as pale as his had been, and there was a hardness in it which seemed to Mary as if were fixed there, and could not quit it, but must continue perceptible in its restored bloom, the reflection of Fra's punishment.

‘I am very sorry for the poor Czar,’ Mary said to herself often at that time, ‘and yet I cannot help thinking he was also to blame, for he must have blinded himself wilfully. Fra is no hypocrite, with all her sins. He might have seen what kind of girl she was. A true man ought to be the master of his passion, and not mastered by it.’

The Czar was so far master of himself that crossed love did not send him off at a tangent, as mortified vanity had sent him. He might also be more fettered by hard circumstances than he was at an earlier date. At least he did not leave Dresden, though he came no more to the Carterets’. Mary had reason to know that he fagged on at his adopted occupation of a teacher, looking ten years older—a wiser, as well as a sadder, man she was fain to trust. When she met him in the streets he avoided her. She could not expect anything else. But after an interval Alice was authorised to tell Mary, for her comfort, that her brother had heard from Mr. Penryn, to whom he had written, and that the latter had procured for the Czar a highly promising situation. Everything which concerned the Czar or herself was highly promising in Alice’s vocabulary.

CHAPTER LVII.

MEISSEN, WITH THE GRAF IN HIS RIGHT MIND.

MARY sought to make amends to Alice for the neglect with which Fra, after the episode of the Czar, treated his sister.

Alice, while full of resentment on her brother's account and her own against Fra Carteret, was too much a woman of the world, not to say too reasonable and good-natured, to refuse the propitiation offered by Mary.

When Gisela could spare her companion, Mary lionised Alice all over Dresden.

Alice did not care much for the Picture Gallery, though she tried her best to get up a little rapture for what the cultivated world raved about, but she was greatly pleased with the treasures of the Green Vaults, and the Historical Museum. The carved ivory, silver-gilt, and jewelled cabinets were sufficiently works of art for her. She enjoyed the ingenious idea of the drinking cups, which had been wound up by machinery, and sent spinning round the festive board, till they stopped at a guest condemned to drain the draught ; and

of the characteristic gift from a Russian Czar, the gold egg, which opens and displays an enamel hen, the hen which opens and shows a diamond-set crown and seal, and lastly the crown which opens and gives forth a diamond ring. She was enchanted with the crown jewels and orders, including the Queen's grand brilliant necklace, the rows and rows of pearls, and the aigrette, too heavy to be worn on the royal shoulder.

Alice could not understand why Mary should stand still before that basket of flowers, manufactured from bread crumbs, 'the work of a lady.'

'Yes, yes, it is sweetly pretty; but there are so many finer things,' protested Alice, wishing to hurry on, since the man in charge would not spend more time than was necessary on the sight-seers.

'It is like a woman's life,' said Mary.

Alice did not altogether comprehend. 'Then did you think the ivory shrine, with the hundreds of figures representing the condemnation of the wicked, which was the work of an old monk and that we passed a little while ago, was like a man's life?'

'No,' said Mary, 'because a monk is less of a man than a woman, though thanks for reminding me of it. But I'll tell you what is more to the point—that toy of the great Mogul and his court, which occupied a famous craftsman, his family, and pupils for eight years. And here are carvings in cherry stones, agates, and blood stones,

which would have been fine in taste and pains had they not been fiddling.' Mary stopped short, for there recurred to her Nuremberg and its art remains, with Taff Penryn's generous sympathy, when he had not grudged a day of the labour bestowed on them.

In the Historical Museum, the companions neglected the armour and weapons in order to do justice to the old queens' and electresses' cabinets, which were also their toilet and work tables. That of the Electress Anna—with her mania for cleanliness and order, seemed to contradict Mary's comparison, for it not only folded out into a spinnet, and was capable of holding a medicine chest; but it had a receptacle expressly set apart for mathematical instruments.

There were tragic and heroic elements of the show in the scarf with faded blood drops, and the coat presenting a bullet hole, memorials of the Saxon prince slain in battle; in the hat worn by Peter the Great; and the horseshoe crushed by the grasp of Augustus the Strong; though with regard to the last, Mary had small regard for the Hercules steeped in luxury, the abjurer of the faith of Frederick the Wise and John, and who is the '*Monsieur, je vous n'entends pas*' of all the earlier monuments in Dresden. After these relics, the curious collection of shoes, including gold embroidered, high-heeled, sharp-pointed slippers of Maria Theresa's, and shabby work-a-day slippers

of the poet Wieland's, had a savour of levity about them.

When Mary proposed to go with Alice to Meissen, Baroness Gisela asked to be of the party. To Mary's surprise, after the ladies had established themselves on board the steamboat, and were on the point of starting, the Mad Graf, as on a former occasion—and with the usual sensation, crossed the gangway.

If only Fra had known! But the Graf had enough of adorers, as it was, supposing that he retained his maw for adulation, in the general public, who kept up the fame of his dignity and his eccentricities; in his cousin, who was always proud of his attendance; and in Alice, who was at the stage to which Fra and Lyd had attained when they went to Saxon Switzerland. Alice was content only to have a distinguished, romantic Graf in the party to which she belonged, even though he should not deign to address a single syllable to her. But the Graf, in his newly-found politeness, looked as if he could be solemnly courteous to the whole world, especially since he did not begin by putting himself in the Childe Harold pose.

The steamboat sailed as early as half-past nine in the morning, which was an April morning, bright with sunshine. The low banks were already vividly green; the holiday makers were just in time for the snowy wealth of cherry blossom which is a distinctive feature of the neighbour-

hood of Dresden, and which in the Plauensche Grund causes the marvel to be seen of a whole hill side hoary with flower.

The red roofs of the villages, with or without their orchards, looked cheerful against the blue sky, and beside the brown river. One little yellow church had many gables and a sharp-pointed black spire rising out of the red roof of its square tower.

Sticks rose in the middle of the stream to mark the current and the depth of water. Once the steamboat grounded slightly, and its men had to shout to the raftsmen in the neighbouring barge to get a hint in steering.

The company were not numerous or striking. There was a party of English school-girls in charge of a teacher or elder friend. They chattered and crocheted, looked little at the scenery, but partook with healthy appetites of two distinct refreshments of sandwiches and lunch-cake, in the course of the morning's sail. It was clear that an impromptu meal was to be the great and frequently recurring event in their day's pleasure. A German country girl kept a glass of beer, from which she occasionally drank, on the seat beside her. A comely young Kellnerin, in apron and bib, with bare hair, offered more glasses of beer to the rest of the passengers. About the hour of noon a perceptible smell of onions was wafted from the cabin.

A fair-haired mooning lady, with a white necktie, 'danked sehr' the observant person who restored her dropped ticket. A little child sat demurely still in her elaborate dress, with her little parasol, and little drops in the rings in her little ears. A woman in mourning and in tears went out at a little station, carrying a large gaudy wreath of evergreens mingled with artificial roses, to lay upon a grave. Some men, sailing elsewhere, wore crape round their arms and bore one of the long green branches, which look like palms, and are borne before funerals. Life was not a holiday to all the voyagers to Meissen that spring morning.

Several homely, elderly women in thick woollen petticoats, various coloured kerchiefs tied over the head, and heavily-laden baskets strapped on their backs, had much in common with figures Mary had seen at ferries in the West Highlands of Scotland.

Käthenbroda was delightfully situated in the middle of vine-clad and wooded hills, mirrored in the water at its feet; grey stone walls were built across the hill side to bank up the earth, and numerous little houses dotted the vineyards.

On one bank the valley narrowed, and the wooded hills dove-tailed into each other. On a central hill stood a large old yellow Schloss, with a red roof, a long barrack-like building, furnished with towers and gables; just below a little rustic

mill was so much in the river that it was surrounded by water. 'That is like Buchenwald on the outside,' cried both the Graf and Gisela in one breath, leaving it to be imagined that the inside of Buchenwald transcended description.

Further down appeared another great old yellow castle, that of Siebeneichen, red roofed also, and having a square tower, which formed part of the building, overgrown with ivy; while in the distance, amidst vineyards, rose the still more imposing yellow and red walls and roofs, towers and gables, and tall pierced spire of the fortress of Albrechtsburg. It was a fit dwelling for an imprisoned alchymist, who found the clay for Meissen china instead of the philosopher's stone, but it is now given over to a military garrison, and commands the little town of Meissen lying at its feet.

Mary was not at liberty to think of the old alchymist and his modern follower, because of the necessity of reaching the hotel of the 'Hirsch,' to which the party were directed by an old woman, in whose patois Markt was broadest 'Markte.' Through markets, in good truth, one after the other, until the Alt Markt was reached—and there stood the oldest church in Meissen, a round building with irregular roof, high towers and a fine old grey gateway—the way led to the hotel of the Hirsch, with stone carved figures above its door, looking little less ancient.

In the Speise Saal the guests were served with

black bread and raw ham, to which the Graf and Gisela had no objection. But Mary stood out against the raw ham, and was courteously backed by the Graf. So in spite of the laughter of a fair-haired German who was dining at the same table, and the protestations of the waiter—hurt in his sense of honour, the latter was induced, in order to meet English prejudices, to spoil the ham by cooking it.

There was only one street to ascend, and upwards of a hundred steps to mount, while the visitors looked down on red roofs and small gardens, gay with auricula, yellow lilies and little statues on pedestals, to gain the fortification of the Albrechtsburg, commanding a magnificent view up and down the Elbe. The party of English girls came chattering out of the porch of the church, which formed part of the Castle, as the others entered it. Within were brasses to the memory of old margraves and early members of the Saxon royal house—among them the leaders who as the ‘Little Princes,’ proved the prey of the Robber Knights, and were the ancestors of ‘Albert the Good,’ whom England claims for her own.

At the story, the Graf, who had been stalking about in his element, glanced with furtive deprecation at Mary. But their thoughts bore no relation to each other. He was wincing at the memory of the Ringstein, and his behaviour there. Her mind had wandered back, as it had travelled

all the morning, to an earlier sail on the Elbe, and to the gay story-teller, with whom she had attempted to pull caps, in the legends of the Robber Knights.

In the Fürsten Capelle was a quaint old picture by Cranach, and a Christ on the cross, in white porcelain, on the altar. Another picture was said to contain a portrait of the vivacious Catherine Brora.

By narrow, old-fashioned streets, and a country suburb, where weeping willows shook out tender green tresses, the modern porcelain manufactory was gained. The English school-girls and the German, who had dined in the Speise saal, were already at the entrance, and fell naturally into the party. The whole company were conducted by their guide through the stores of costly china, in every variety of colour, frequently encrusted with its unique encrustation of blue forget-me-nots and white may-flower, red roses and yellow buttercups. Then came suites of rooms filled with men engaged in moulding the soft clay into moulds innumerable for what looked like dolls' heads, busts, arms, and legs. To these succeeded apartments where cheeses of fireclay contained the plates or bowls which had been burnt, and tubs held liquid silica into which each piece, freed from its enclosure, was dipped to receive its polish.

And so the process went on until the men pared and refined the models taken out of the moulds and

touched up the blue patterns nearly black before they were exposed to the fire. The first patterns were pricked out in paper, like the old designs for damask linen, and tinted through the holes: no great art there. But following up the gradations of progress, the visitors arrived at embryo artists engaged in painting and combining costumes, fruit, and flowers, with no aid save from the suggestions supplied by old French prints, in the Watteau style, hung before the workmen, and by the natural flowers growing in the windows. A humpbacked dwarf added the last delicate lines to the gorgeous mantle of a lovely little queenly figure; a pale lad gave the bloom of the grape to the clusters mantling over a superb vase.

Most of the men, glancing up from their operations in the heated atmosphere which Germans love, had faces of an intellectual and refined type. Mary looked wistfully at them, then turned involuntarily to the countenance of the stolid Graf, sauntering with a vacant, slightly wearied air, at their back, and could have smiled at the contrast.

At last the women's quarters were gained; comfortable quarters enough, where well-dressed, well-grown Saxon *Mädchen*, in the universal apron and bib, were furnished with tools having agate points, and rubbed away mechanically, as for life, so as not to leave a corner of gilding unpolished.

'Is this all that the women can do?' Mary asked, in disappointment and mortification; and

she was answered, 'All, save in laying on the simplest blue patterns.' Germany, which loads women like beasts of burden, and requires from them notable housekeeping, has not done much to develope the artistic faculties of her daughters.

Mary and her party returned to Dresden by railway—getting birds'-eye views from the opposite side of Siebeneichen and Weisstropf, with the afternoon shadows on their old castles—and passing close by villages, or rather country towns, showing substantial houses, spring gardens, and sprouting vineyards.

During the whole excursion the Graf had not once molested Mary. He had distributed his little cares with the strictest impartiality, even laying aside his class pride and extending them to Alice, until the wildest ideas began to unhinge her practical mind. For the Graf was a great deal at Madame Marck's in those days, and nobody suspected him of more than cousinly regard for the Baroness Gisela. Alice would have been a different woman from what she was, if she had not speculated excitedly on his possible attraction. It seemed as if the Graf, now that he had grown sane, was doomed for a time, in punishment of his former errors, to cast the mantle of his madness over whoever approached him.

At the Leipsic station there was a little delay in procuring droschkies, and some one proposed coffee. It was over the coffee which he had

brought to her, amidst the smoke clouds of the thronged refreshment-room, when the day's excursion was all but ended, that the Graf said again to Mary words which she could have wished unsaid.

‘Miss Carteret, you are not married and settled in England.’ He mentioned the self-evident fact in deep, almost sepulchral tones, which were for her ear alone, while he stood towering in his height before her.

‘No,’ answered Mary, with a gasp, taken by surprise as she was.

‘Mine young lady, will you not marry and sit down in Germany?’ he insinuated persuasively.

‘Oh no, Herr Graf, I never will,’ replied Mary, with hasty emphasis, roused to the importance of the words.

The Graf bowed and turned away, but more with dignified resignation than in sulks.

Yet that day at Meissen had great and unlooked-for consequences. The first news which Mary heard in the week that followed was the announcement of the Graf von Felsberg’s betrothal to his cousin Gisela, Baroness von Rudener. He was fated to astound the world by his marriage even in the act of emerging from the folly slough of his youth. The last and, as some judged, the crowning act of his eccentricity was to show that the Graf von Felsberg could afford to dispense with the qualities which men ordinarily require in a wife. To be Gräfin von

Felsberg was to have lustre enough. What did she want besides of beauty or dowry in hard coin?

Gisela herself might have demurred at the conclusion, for her cousin's sake; but it was his will, and she had never disputed it. She was as wrapped up as he could have been at his maddest moment, in the supreme majesty of the Graf von Felsberg, which, let him do what he would within the bounds of the Ten Commandments, still rendered his actions becoming, and threw a halo over all connected with him. When Gisela was Gräfin von Felsberg she would cease to be shy and insignificant in her own eyes. Her hideous squint, which he had passed over, or rather which had possessed some subtle charm of early association and kindred affection for him, would become in her mind a positive attraction, enough to make it the fashion in Germany. There was nothing for Gisela save blissful acquiescence in the splendid fortune which, against all the chances, had fallen to her lot—as there was nothing for Madame Marck except wellnigh frantic exultation, and for Baron Sandor, Lyd, the aged father, and the crowd of retainers in the Tannenthal, only joy and thanksgiving.

Alice Honeywood, who had so much that was accommodating in her disposition, forgot conveniently that she had entertained an April morning's crazy solution of the Graf's attendance at Madame Marck's, and felt herself amply compen-

sated for the coming loss of her situation in the reflected *éclat* of such a marriage, and in the immense privilege which she knew would be hers, in the future, of paying long friendly visits to Felsberg, the Buchenwald, and the Sophienlust.

But Fra Carteret was enraged and indignant beyond bounds. 'The man must have been mad throughout'—she reversed all her former decisions without a moment's hesitation—'fit for the Sonnenschein or any other lunatic asylum. He really ought to be shut up, or put under restraint of some kind; this disgraceful marriage should not be permitted.'

However, Fra had no power to prevent it; she had even to cool down in her bitterness and make a feint of congratulating her early friend Gisela according to the usages of society.

As for Mary, after the first shock of surprise, she was inclined to think well of the marriage, and to see it in a better light than anyone not closely connected with Gisela contemplated it. She could congratulate honestly, not only Gisela, but the Graf, who received her congratulations with his usual dignity intact, and that in spite of the words which had passed so lately between him and Mary at the railway station coming back from Meissen.

It was not a mere insolent defiance of public opinion, a wanton insult to beauty and wealth contending for his favour. It was not even alto-

gether a fit of pique, however recent the last passage between him and Mary.

Mary could believe that, in the middle of his lingering passion for her, he had been drawn, in the first impulses of the more reasonable and worthier life towards which he was turning, to his favourite cousin among his few relations, who was herself a model of noble, modest virtue.

Mary could quite conceive that her lover had grown of himself more than half wearied with a pursuit which had never received the smallest encouragement, to which she had administered a deathblow a whole year before, and in which there had always mingled so much that was unsubstantial and fantastic.

In his increasing sanity he was fast becoming ashamed of his demonstrative devotion to Mary. In the reaction he had reverted to the simple affections which had always existed in the man and to their chief object, the cousin who had exalted him above his deserts—he was beginning to confess—and of whom he had been boyishly fond. Here was something solid, earnest, and magnanimous, on which it was a relief to the soul of man to fall back.

Still there had lingered a remnant of what had been real in his passion for Mary, which was stirred up by their revived intercourse, and needed to be laid finally to rest. To the credit of the Graf's pride also, it seemed to have prompted him to re-

new rather than withdraw his overtures to Mary, that Taff Penryn, to whom she had condescended, had failed her, and there was on her the German stigma of a broken troth-plight.

Pride, peculiarity, sudden impulse, all might have to do with the Graf's betrothal; but fidelity to early associations and a generous ignoring of defects had likewise their share in the compact.

‘Nobody could ever care for him—himself—as Gisela cares. He always liked her, and I noticed the day that we were at Meissen the liking was no longer teasing, arbitrary, and regardless of her tastes and feelings, but had become more considerate and gentler. I think they will be happy,’ Mary came to the conclusion.

CHAPTER LVIII.

THE MAN WHO WAS GRASPING AT THE MOON AND
SECURED A GAS-LAMP FOR HIS OWN SHARE.

‘I BELIEVE I ought to be thankful, Mary,’ Mr. Carteret confided to his daughter on a day in May, after he had finished reading a letter from one of his sons, which contained no petition for fresh supplies or any murmur against circumstances. ‘Years and a taste of hardship seem to be making a man of that boy. As for my son-in-law, from all I hear, I am convinced he is as honest and industrious a fellow as if he were not a poor nobleman, and he seems to be thoroughly attached to Lyd.’

‘Yes, papa,’ answered Mary, ‘and it is a treat to see Lyd with her child in her arms, while mamma is as proud of being a grandmother as the old Baron is of his heir in the third generation.’ But she thought in her heart, ‘I dare say papa includes in his causes for gratitude that I am quit of Taff Penryn.’

Her heart smote her the next moment for her gratuitous reflection, when she looked up from the

writing-table at which they both sat and saw her father's white head—it had grown nearly white in the course of the last two years—bending over a plan of the Warren property, which he had to compare with accounts sent him by his agent. ‘Will papa never return home again, where the laburnums are now forming a golden alley? He was so fond of the old place—his inheritance, which was rendered doubly dear to him by having been put in peril once, where he brought mamma as a bride, where we were all born, where he tried his experiments, and failed, no doubt; still the very ground which he trod then is dear to the man who has come to hope so little from the future. Oh, I may well consent to papa's being thankful because Regy is not quite a scapegrace and Lyd is happy in her home.’

Mr. Carteret brought back a guest to dinner that day, and to Mary's surprise it was her old friend, Herr Mönch. He must have signed an amnesty, or else he did not include her father in their feud. Probably the last was the correct explanation of his presence, since it struck Mary that he still looked at her with reprobating eyes, while he did not make a single advance to their old friendly footing, and forbore to enquire if she had lately been renewing her acquaintance with Bruss and Wallaice.

It seemed to Mary there was a shade of constraint and effort in her father's manner, and that

he glanced from time to time at her with something like nervous anxiety.

The notion made her heart beat fast, and caused her to listen with all her ears to what was said between him and Herr Mönch.

It was her father who began abruptly, 'As I told you, Herr Mönch, I am very happy to hear it. Being a countryman, in part, of the gentleman, I must be allowed to take some pleasure and pride in his success.'

Mary was conscious that her eyes were opening wide, and that the Saal was beginning to whirl round with her.

Well it might. Was the world revolutionised by a discovery which should affect the very spheres, and yet was Dresden going about its ordinary work on the eve of that work being incalculably lightened as it had not been since Adam ate bread in the sweat of his brow? Was there no universal shout of jubilee that should have reached even her, where she moved in her woman's orbit? Was her father receiving the greatest wonder that had ever concerned the material world with this consummate coolness?

But Herr Mönch's words in reply, sounding as they did faintly and very far off, yet retaining in their faintness a conspicuous dry triumph in the tones, disabused her of her dream. 'You have right, mein Herr,' said Herr Mönch. 'The same,

the illustrious Penryn, is ours, and so is his new gun, which will change the fate of war.'

Only the fate of war in connection with a new matchlock; not the relief of humanity throughout the ages! Mary, in her agitation, with her nerves strung to the highest pitch, could have wept at the anticlimax, while the great secret of perpetual motion—*ignis fatuus* or morning star, was still to be found, still remote and inscrutable as ever.

When Mary recovered her composure, and was able to attend again to the conversation which had been sounding round her in a confused jangle of voices, she was made aware that the man who had grasped at the moon had caught a gas-lamp for his share; that therefore the talk did concern her, and she was bound to rejoice in a measure. Her father had judged correctly thus far of her feelings, and had brought Herr Mönch to repeat in her hearing his tale, with which all Dresden truly was ringing, though she who was so much interested in it had not heard it till this moment.

The greater time Mary had to think, the more she rejoiced, until she raised her head with pride and gladness, and looked with a radiant beautiful face at Herr Mönch as he descanted on the greatness of his friend and pupil's invention, which had taken the Army and the War Office by storm, and

was to outdo the gun of Armstrong, even as Germany had outshone the rest of the world in her battles.

If there was malice and a gleam of arrogance in the eloquent tongue and sparkling eyes of the old chemist—who still avoided looking at Mary as he held forth, she freely forgave him, and she had never felt more affectionately disposed towards him.

Then, as will happen when people are very happy and there is a pathetic minor chord in their happiness, a bar of humour and fun crossed the pathos and the happiness in Mary's heart. She suddenly raised her voice, without, however, speaking in a high key; on the contrary, her tones were very soft in their satisfaction and their momentary merriment when she said, 'All Mr. Penryn's friends must sing pæans; but how does he answer to his conscience for giving to the world a gun after a bobbin? Is it not reversing the order of affairs—the prophet's vision of beating the spears into pruning-hooks, the heathen myth of Minerva's olive after Neptune's horse?'

Herr Mönch made a formal bow, gave one glare at Mary, and then assured her dogmatically that the shortest, simplest way to put an end to war was to arm warriors with the deadliest weapons.

Mr. Carteret confirmed the statement, and prosecuted the discussion with increased animation. He had not allowed himself to tremble for the effect upon Mary of the triumph which he

had permitted her, still it had come in the form of an ordeal, and it was his turn to triumph now because of the manner in which she had stood the test, and since he had judged her rightly by himself.

In the meantime, Mrs. Carteret was sighing secretly over Mary's insensibility. Of course she was bound not to give way in company; no well brought-up girl should; but her mother had not even an inducement to signal to James to pour out madeira instead of claret for Miss Carteret when she joined in the conversation, without any call for it, in that off-hand, half jesting fashion.

Fra was sitting leaning languidly back in her chair, as if the subject spoken of, notwithstanding its bearing on the Light Blues, were beneath her notice.

Herr Mönch, from dwelling with patriotic enthusiasm on the still more glorious victories in store for the Germans, passed to boasting—certainly with malice this time—on the honours and the gain which would accrue to Herr Penryn. The King had directed that he should appear at court. No doubt a title awaited him at no distant day. He would be the richest man in Germany.

‘Count Penryn like Count Rumford—the title of a Chevalier d’Industrie—and the richest man in Germany—that is not saying much,’ said Fra, speaking for the first time as she trifled with the biscuits on her plate.

‘Excuse me, my gracious young lady,’ said the fiery old advocate, bestowing on her a glance only less fierce than that with which he had sought to burn up Mary. ‘Perhaps I did wrong to say Germany; the King will instruct the War Office that the invention be employed in all their foundries, the Emperor will introduce the improvement into his foundries, and the whole of Europe will follow suit. Der Tausend! Herr Penryn, who has a tribute on each gun, or who sells his invention for one huge sum, may be the richest man in Europe.’

‘And even then he will not be richer than his deserts, mein Herr,’ said Mary, bending with a bright gracious smile to the eager speaker, as Mrs. Carteret rose from the dinner-table, thinking that great nonsense was being spoken, in which conclusion she was not altogether wrong.

Mary sat alone in her room in the soft sweet twilight of a May evening when all Dresden was abroad at such an open-air concert as those with which Carl Maria von Weber first delighted the ears and trained the tastes of the townspeople. Even Mr. Carteret had been tempted to escort Mrs. Carteret and Fra to sit on one of the white painted benches at one of the little round tables, and drink coffee amidst hundreds of heads of families similarly employed. Herr Mönch, be sure, had cast chemistry and even friendly advocacy to the winds, and was luxuriating under the

melodious strains which were like beams of sunshine to him. But Mary must sing her *Te Deum* all by herself. She did not often trust herself with entire leisure, but she claimed it this night to think everything out. Taff Penryn, though he was a world wide of his goal, was a great man in the world's eyes, as she had always known him. The highest, no less than the most intellectual, circles of his country were resounding with his fame and his praises this night! It was even true what Herr Mönch had said, that his exploit was an earnest of a long list of exploits, whether or not he should ever reach the dizzy height of his ambition. Men, for the sake of what he had done, would begin to believe. However daring his assertions or bold his speculations, in time to come, he would no longer be judged as a fool and a madman.

Failure, obscurity, indigence, which had haunted even Taff Penryn in his dark hours, were put at once and for ever behind him. His faithful old ally, Herr Mönch, who had come to taunt her with what she had lost, could hardly have exaggerated much when he had sketched, in glowing colours, the bright, prosperous career, the splendid fortune in store for the man of simplest tastes and habits. Yet it was little that Taff Penryn would care for the splendour, or even the renown, if he were but left at liberty to contrive and labour for the good of mankind and the glory of God.

Without question her father had been right in

his tender manœuvre, when he had comprehended that to hear this good news would be the greatest boon that could be conferred on Mary. She had met him in the garden after he had taken leave of Herr Mönch, and had said to him, to render assurance doubly sure, 'Is it all true, papa?'

He had answered, 'Quite true, my dear; Penryn has justified the expectations of his friends and confounded the malice of his enemies—if he had enemies—rather the jeers of unbelievers; I am bound to say it. And the same result has occurred so often before—baffling as life is—in the history of remarkable men, that I begin to wonder more of us cannot give ourselves the satisfaction of anticipating it.' Not a word was said of the tie which had existed and been broken between Mary and the inventor.

She was glad and proud for Taff Penryn, with such a womanly gladness and pride that she absolutely forgot herself in its first indulgence. Later, she reflected, that not only was she condemned to utter her thanksgiving at a distance, cut off from what might have been her near and dear part in his lot; his very attainment had demolished her last shred of hope in their reunion.

Sometimes, when thinking of Taff Penryn as she had seen him in England, Mary had been driven to forebode sadly his wreck, his sinking into mere mental extravagance, without balance or practical application.

But there had always been a glimmer of consolation in the despair of the apprehension. When his life was thus spoilt and poverty-stricken, and when his truest comrade was tempted to desert him, she felt somehow she would know by intuition how much he wanted her. And then she might turn to her father and say, ‘This man’s father—foolish spendthrift as he was—stripped himself for you. Can we let the son perish?’ She could have gone in that extremity and begged of Taff Penryn himself, without maiden shame, that they should be reconciled. And if her sympathy, forbearance, and tenderness had ever possessed power over Taff Penryn, she might have been permitted to win him back to healthy moderation, to the beneficent use, not the wild abuse, of his great gifts. How high would then have been her privilege, and how blest her mission!

But to Taff Penryn become famous and honoured, with riches and distinction gathering in glittering heaps before him, Mary could never go. Why should she, when he would have no need of her?

CHAPTER LIX.

WALHALLA.—NEEDED STILL.

GISELA, to the delight of her old friends, was to be married in her father's house. All the Carterets should have been there in the gathering of friends and connections. And Fra had no objections to going with her mother and the Gräfin von Hersfeld, being as gracious as she had ever been to the bride and bridegroom, and renewing her patronage of Alice Honeywood. Indeed, Fra said frankly that this was her opportunity of visiting Lyd without being bored to death.

With the exception of Mary and her father, nobody seemed to see any reason why Mary should not be present also, and the two were considerably ashamed of the tenacity of their memories, when they recognised the complete oblivion into which the rest of the world, including the Graf, had fallen with regard to any awkwardness in the association.

However, Mr. Carteret had taken an early opportunity of finding that he must pay a flying visit, with Mary for his companion, to the Danube in Bavaria, this summer or never, and that the

period of the visit should correspond with the date of Gisela's marriage.

Accordingly, Mary and her father were in Regensburg on the eve of the wedding. In the afternoon they turned their backs on the old Rathhaus, with its torture-chamber, its dungeons beneath its hall of Diet, and its room full of portraits of grim Electors. They forsook the ancient Schotten Kirche, where a colony of monks from beyond the 'Siller Tweed' had found quarters and left a name.

The Carterets were going to drive to the Walhalla, that most superb whim of the art-bitten King Ludwig, to whose craze they had been so largely indebted in Munich. The carriage crossed both the Regen and the Danube—the great river still comparatively in its infaney, and with a chalky white in its blue only less pronounced than the dim white of the Isar—over old bridges, with crumbling arches surmounted by mouldering figures, where a grinning head found a place beside the Virgin and Child, and where an old acquaintance presented himself in St. John of Prague, with his five stars.

In the first suburb was a Calvary—the Christ crowned with roses in honour of the day, which happened to be that of the Dead.

The country beyond was wide, bare, and fresh, in keeping with a day which was bright but cold for the season, with wind and scudding clouds.

It was a pleasure to be among the fields, and to be reminded of home by the tossing blue-green rye with its dark heads, the clover, the springing potatoes, the ploughed land in preparation for turnips, the peafields, the young, bright, green barley and wheat stretching away in the distance, with the red-roofed villages scattered here and there, and the larks singing blithely in the air high overhead. The whole had an indescribable charm of simple, homely beauty. Occasionally a cross in the field, or a Calvary great or small by the wayside, marked the difference between Bavaria and England.

The long wooded ridge of the Weinberg broke the monotony of the plain. Vines grew on the slopes. An old grey castle lay half buried in a hollow between that and an opposite ridge. Holiday pedestrians crossed the fields and climbed the heights.

The hamlet of Donaustauf appeared nestling beneath the ridge, with the ruined Castle of Stauf, sacked by the Swedes, perched on the crags above, and the little village church—a very little white one—elevated on another height, which could only be reached by steeply cut steps. Just beyond it rose the great pillared Grecian portico of the Walhalla, built on the summit and side of a wooded hill, with the Danube below, traversing the wide corn and pasture plain of Straubing, which was dotted with villages, and had its own ancient little

town, the scene of a barbarous tragedy of the middle ages. There one of the famous burgher maidens of Augsburg, Agnes Bernauer, the barber's daughter, wedded in a huge misalliance with Duke Albert III., of Bavaria, was, on the false accusation of her father-in-law, Duke Ernest, in the absence of her husband, tried, condemned to death, and thrown into the Danube.

Between the Carterets and the Danube were green meadows, brilliantly yellow with kingcups, and gay in a profusion of blue, white, and rose-coloured wild flowers.

Danaustauf had been keeping its Day of the Dead, and had slender birch-trees set thickly along its narrow street, festoons and garlands of pine-twigs hung on the houses—several of them with rude representations of the Virgin and Child, and Christ carved over their doors and beneath their windows—while the pavement was strewn with rushes. A large square house, a country-seat of the Prince of Thurn and Taxis, was set in shrubberies, where laburnums like those at the Warren and red and white hawthorns were in full bloom. The grounds were open to the public, and a number of droschkies stood unyoked before the little Gasthaus opposite.

Mary and her father alighted near the steps leading up to the miniature church, with stations of the cross, like tiny gables of houses, at regular intervals in the ascent. In front of each gable

was a green grating, and beyond it a picture of the Lord at each stage of his suffering. .

The road to the Walhalla ran by the side of a lovely meadow between wooded hills. On the hill opposite the Walhalla rose a boarded structure, thatched with boughs, and there was stationed the inevitable band of music. The Carterets began to climb a winding footpath through the under-wood, with finches singing in the bushes and woodruff carpeting the ground below the tree-stems. Soldiers in the Bavarian blue were coming down. A splendid specimen of a larch fir afforded a landmark. Then came the substantial house of the keeper ; and at a sudden turn appeared the green glade or plateau, with the stately building right in front.

A few homely enough people were strolling about. Among them were women and children, with their hands full of blue wild larkspur, crimson maiden-pink, the large yellow vetch, and the great trefoil leaves of the wood-sorrel which grew on the verge of the terrace, only a few feet from the double row of unpolished grey marble pillars and the scenes from German history in sculptured groups on the pediments.

A gentle push to one of the wings of the great door admitted to an amazed view of the cold, glittering grandeur, among which some living groups moved stealthily and with bated breath.

There was only one obligation imposed on

visitors: the man who deprived them of their umbrellas required the company to invest their feet in pairs of uncouth overshoes of felt from the row standing ready for use. Thus equipped, each new comer, whether prince or peasant, might slide or glide across the polished marble floor and inspect the marvels around at will.

Glittering marble was everywhere except in the roof, which was coloured deep blue with great gold stars, and was supported by twelve female warriors from the German mythology—magnificent figures, by Schwanthaler, in draperies of pale lilac, blue, white, and gold. They stood now two and two, now singly, with their arms raised above their heads and their hands bearing up the roof. The farther extremity of the hall was marked off by columns according to orthodox Greek art. A broad frieze of white marble sculptured with scenes from German history, after the fashion of the Elgin marbles, surrounded the hall. Below were bands of reddish brown and yellow marble, containing marble slabs with the names of old heroes and emperors. Still lower were white marble brackets, each bearing the bust of a great German musician, poet, astronomer, general—men great in every fashion, with yet more marble shelving and more busts, and only one little space left vacant. On each side, at intervals, were three glorious winged Victories by the sculptor Rauch, in which the snowy purity of the marble was in

keeping with the symmetry of the figures. Low broad seats of chiselled marble poised on sculptured animals, and on which no weary wight ever ventured to rest, and tall candelabra of marble guiltless of dispensing light completed the furnishing of King Ludwig's Temple of Fame. The floor, with its lozenges of variegated marble, had the two inscriptions let into it of the dates of the commencement and the completion of the work.

The whole scene was sumptuous and fantastic ; but cold as the Bath of Hercules.

As Mary and her father inspected the details, they were surprised by the entrance of an English gentleman of their acquaintance, resident in Dresden. After the compatriots had joined forces and gone anew into the merits and demerits of King Ludwig's great offering to Fame, Mary remarked that somebody of consequence was coming, for she noticed that a considerable commotion had arisen among the Germans near the entrance.

'One of their petty princes,' said the lately arrived Englishman irreverently.

'No,' maintained Mary, disinclined to lose the credit of her observation, 'nothing so common. I heard that man who pressed past me, as fast as his felt shoes would admit, say of the person entering, that he should have a place here yet. We are in great good luck ; you are deeply in-

debted to me for calling your attention to him ; we are to see a living hero among the shades of his brethren.'

The words were scarcely out of Mary's mouth when, from the little excited throng which had gathered about the door, and followed by their admiring scrutinising glances, walked, or rather—in the exigencies of the felt overshoes, which were ready to fall off all feet save those colossal enough for Titans if not for Gods, slid—Taff Penryn, as blonde-headed, brown-checked, simple and unconscious-looking as ever.

A thunderbolt might have fallen—not inappropriately, in the hall of the gods, and so need not have occasioned any great sensation there ; but to be made to see Taff Penryn appear visibly among the immortals, and to hear him hailed as in his fit sphere, was a shock to his old friends.

What would his bearing be towards them ? would he prove himself human enough to be vindictive and to testify earthly weakness ? were questions for breathless consideration.

He noticed and recognised them almost immediately—strange as the meeting-place was—and stopped short in the effect produced upon him.

Mary did not look again in Taff Penryn's direction. She did not seem to think, barely to breathe, until she found him close to them, greeting them—herself as well as her father—quietly and courteously. What else was there left for

him to do in common self-respect, not to say in consideration for their former friendship and for those usages of society with regard to which, perhaps, he cared as little as most men.

A little talk passed between Mr. Carteret and Taff Penryn on the chances which had brought them there, and the attraction of the Walhalla; and then Taff Penryn fell back naturally as Mr. Carteret's companion addressed some words to him.

But the party were not permitted to part thus. Mr. Carteret's friend, who had been electrified by the last arrival's proving an acquaintance of the Carterets, and who had caught eagerly at his name, was soliciting an introduction to a distinguished young countryman who was destined to be a man of mark in Germany.

The proceeding impressed Mary as the oddest and most significant—because involuntary, indication of the change in the world's sentiments towards Taff Penryn; and she could not help wondering whether Taff remarked the difference in the slightly ceremonious manner with which Mr. Carteret said the words, 'Allow me to introduce my friend Mr. Hutchinson to you, Mr. Penryn.' Following upon the introduction, the group were condemned to stand and converse for a longer period and to go on a little farther together. Mr. Hutchinson, disposed to improve his opportunity of extracting an opinion on Walhalla from an embryo immortal, hastened to put it to Taff

Penryn whether he approved of the colossal compound monument which they were examining, and whether he did not think it was more in honour of Greek art than of German intellect, and was, when all was done, but a mongrel representation of both.

Taff Penryn laughed a little—the protest was so thoroughly English, yet he was willing to admit its weight. He recorded his conviction that great men ought to erect their own monuments, only amending it by the concession that the nations should publicly acknowledge their gratitude; but in such a costly, spurious mode as this—no! It sounded as if he were making light of the honour which awaited labours and attainments like his own; yet the moment Mr. Carteret took Mr. Hutchinson off, by engaging his friend in a discussion on the architectural proportions of the hall, Taff Penryn came round to Mary's side and asked—as if they had parted the best friends yesterday—with boyish *empressement*, in which she could not detect any reservation, 'Have you heard what I have done?'

'Yes,' said Mary, answering his frank look with equal frankness; 'and I was glad, but not surprised.'

'No, I dare say not,' he said, as simply; 'you always expected something from me.'

There was a moment's pause. Had the splendid chill mockery of the Walhalla ever before been warmed with human passion?

‘It is very little after all,’ he said, again with a change of tone and an accent of wistful deprecation. ‘It is of use to the army in its present condition; yes, and after that it might, if you would consent, be of personal value to me. But if you still see yourself called upon to cancel our engagement, only speak, Mary.’ She did not speak.

They strolled out of the marble hall, careless of the attention which he excited. Mr. Hutchinson looked after them in discontent at the loss of the acquaintance he had acquired. But Mr. Carteret rose to the occasion, took his friend in hand, and strove to stay his fretting by engaging him in the contemplation of the effigies of deceased worthies.

Mary and Taff Penryn were out on the hill-side among the women and children who were gathering the wild flowers. At their feet was the Danube, which flowed past Straubing and had been unable in four hundred years to wash away all traces of the tragedy of human love and hate.

‘We were too rash,’ said Taff Penryn, ‘not in coming together, but in giving each other up.’

‘Your friends will think me a time-server, Taff,’ said Mary. ‘Even Mrs. Penfeather will be forced to suppose that I have made it up with the man who has secured the gas-lamp for his share.’

‘Mrs. Penfeather knows better, and so will the others in due time. I did not think you a time-

server; and I might have sought you and been happy weeks sooner, without waiting till we ran against each other in the Walhalla. But I will make a clean breast of it, Liebchen. We Germans have a bad proverb—

‘Der Jungfrauen Herz ist ein Tauben haus,
Da Einer fliegt ein, der Andre aus.’

‘How could you be so foolish?’ exclaimed Mary.

‘How could I?’ he echoed. ‘I can ask that to-day when the Mad Graf is a bridegroom, and when I am aware that poor Honeywood had another end in view in coming to Germany.’

‘How dared you suppose,’ remonstrated Mary, ‘that I would listen to them, after I had heard you?’

‘There is another good thing which I have sometimes thought might come out of this success of mine,’ he said, thoughtfully, ‘if I am to be a rich man—they say I shall be rich whether I will or no, which is an odd fate for a man in this age. But what should you and I do with so much money, unless your father would have it to re-establish him in the Warren?’

Her eyes filled with tears. ‘Oh, Taff, you would give it to us twice over, and I am not coming to you till you have no more need of me.’

‘Have I not?’ he demanded. ‘Should I not want you to triumph as well as to toil with me,

even if the goal were reached? and, oh, my darling! it is as far away as the stars in the sky!’

‘Taff,’ said Mary, suddenly, ‘you are happy in such a goal. It is they whose aim is low and easily attained who are really to be pitied.’

‘Yes,’ he said, ‘I have not often pitied myself. Now, when I have you to congratulate me, I will do better in holding myself unworthy of my destiny.’

THE END.

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